

Dr Maxwell

1889.

QUEENSLAND.

SUGAR INDUSTRY COMMISSION.

REPORT

OF THE

ROYAL COMMISSION

APPOINTED TO

INQUIRE INTO THE GENERAL CONDITION OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN QUEENSLAND, AND TO REPORT UPON THE CAUSES WHICH HAVE LED TO THE PRESENT LANGUISHING CONDITION OF THE INDUSTRY THROUGHOUT THE COLONY, THE BEST MEANS TO BE ADOPTED FOR REVIVING AND MAINTAINING ITS PROSPERITY, AND, GENERALLY, UPON THE PROSPECTS OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE IN QUEENSLAND;

TOGETHER WITH

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

AND THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSION AND APPENDICES.

Commissioners:

WILLIAM HENRY GROOM, ESQUIRE, M.L.A., CHAIRMAN.

H. E. KING, ESQUIRE

A. S. COWLEY, ESQUIRE, M.L.A.

WILL. ROBERTSON, SECRETARY.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY COMMAND.

BRISBANE:

BY AUTHORITY: JAMES C. BEAL, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, WILLIAM STREET.

1889.

C. A. 20-1889.



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ROBT. J. GRAY.
For the Colonial Secretary and Registrar.

VICTORIA, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, &c., &c.

To WILLIAM HENRY GROOM, Esquire, of Toowoomba; ALFRED SANDLINGS COWLEY, Esquire, of Ingham, Members of the Legislative Assembly of Our Colony of Queensland; and HENRY EDWARD KING, Esquire, of Brisbane, in Our said Colony, Barrister-at-Law.

GREETING :

WHEREAS it has been represented to the Administrator of the Government of Our Colony of Queensland in Council that it is expedient and desirable to appoint Commissioners for the purpose of enquiring into the General Condition of the Sugar Industry in Our said Colony: And whereas the Administrator of the Government of Our said Colony in Council has been pleased to appoint you as Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid: Now Know Ye, that We, reposing special trust and confidence in your zeal, industry, discretion, and ability, do, by these Presents, by and with the advice of Our Executive Council of Our Colony aforesaid, constitute and appoint you, the said WILLIAM HENRY GROOM, ALFRED SANDLINGS COWLEY, and HENRY EDWARD KING, to be Our Commissioners to make a full and searching Inquiry into the General Condition of the Sugar Industry in Queensland, and to report to Our Administrator aforesaid upon the causes which have led to the present languishing condition of the Industry throughout the Colony, the best means to be adopted for reviving and maintaining its prosperity, and, generally, upon the prospects of Tropical Agriculture in Queensland: And We do also, by these Presents, give and grant to you, at any meeting or meetings, full power and authority to call before you such persons as you may judge necessary, by whom you may be better informed of the truth in the premises: And We do further command and enjoin you that you do take down the Examination of the several Witnesses that may appear before you, and reduce the same into writing: And such evidence, with a full and faithful report upon the matters above referred to, as you and each of you shall think fit, to transmit to the Office of Our Chief Secretary of Our said Colony.

And We do hereby appoint WILLIAM ROBERTSON, Esquire, to be Secretary to this Our Commission.

In testimony whereof We have caused this Our Commission to be sealed with the Seal of Our said Colony.

Witness Our trusty and well-beloved Sir ARTHUR HUNTER PALMER, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, President of the Legislative Council and Administrator of the Government of Our said Colony, at Brisbane, this Twenty-eighth day of November, in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight, and in the fifty-second year of Our Reign.

A. H. PALMER.

By His Excellency's Command,

THOMAS McILWRAITH.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSION.

TUESDAY, 4 DECEMBER, 1888.

PURSUANT to Letters Patent, bearing the Great Seal of the Colony, and dated 28th November, 1888, the Commissioners met in No. 1 Committee Room, Parliament House, at 4 p.m.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.

Motion by Mr. King, "That W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., be the Chairman of the Commission." Agreed to.

Mr. Will. Robertson was in attendance as Secretary, and, by direction of the Chairman, read the Commission.

The Secretary was instructed to write to the Collector of Customs at Brisbane for certain returns.

[See Appendix.]

After deliberation it was agreed that the Commission proceed to Townsville by steamer, leaving on 5th January; that Townsville be made the headquarters of the Commission while in the North; that arrangements be there made for visiting Port Douglas, Cairns, Johnstone River, the Delta of the Burdekin, Mourilyan, Mackay, Bundaberg, and Maryborough; that the Commissioners then take evidence in Brisbane; then proceed to the Logan and Tweed River districts, Queensland, and the Clarence River district, New South Wales.

The Secretary was instructed to write Mr. A. S. Cowley, at Ingham, and inform him of these arrangements.

[The Commission then adjourned.]

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

NOTE.—A telegram was subsequently received from A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A., intimating that he agreed entirely with the programme formulated by the Commission.

SATURDAY, 5 JANUARY, 1889.

AT THE A.U.S.N. COMPANY'S WHARF, BRISBANE.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.

The Commissioners met, as arranged on board the s.s. "Cintra," at the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company's wharf, Brisbane, and proceeded thence to Townsville.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

NOTE.—The Commissioners reached Townsville on the 8th January, and were there joined by A. S. Cowley, Esq.

TUESDAY, 8 JANUARY, 1889.

AT THE QUEEN'S HOTEL, TOWNSVILLE.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.

A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the meetings on December 4th and January 5th were read and confirmed.

Mr. Cowley informed the Commission that he thought it best to proceed at once to Port Douglas, and work down the coast to Townsville, because if the wet season set in early the work of the Commission might be very much impeded, and, in consequence, it might possibly happen that the Commissioners would be unable to visit some of the districts.

The Commissioners deliberated, and finally decided to accept Mr. Cowley's suggestion and proceed by the s.s. "Cintra" on the following day to Port Douglas.

It was decided to insert an advertisement in each of the daily morning papers and one in each of the weekly journals, inviting evidence from any person capable of giving information that would assist the inquiry, more particularly in the direction of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing.

The Commissioners also decided to take any evidence that might be tendered to them in Townsville on their return from the districts north of that town.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

NOTE.—The Commissioners arrived at Port Douglas about 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the 10th January, 1889.

THURSDAY,

VIII.

THURSDAY, 10 JANUARY, 1889.

PORT DOUGLAS DISTRICT.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

A letter was read from Fritz Gfriffer, Cudgen, Tweed River, and ordered to be put aside for consideration.

The evidence of Arthur Edward Pywell, Acting Sub-Collector of Customs; and Richard Owen Jones, a farmer on the Mossuan, was taken.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

FRIDAY, 11 JANUARY, 1889.

PORT DOUGLAS DISTRICT.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The evidence of Daniel Hart, selector; J. D. Johnstone, selector; Michael Walsh (of Messrs. Walsh & Co.), merchant, shipper, &c., was taken.

The members of the Commission then proceeded to the selection of Mr. J. J. Montgomerie, situated at Mayfield, on the Mowbray River, a few miles from town.

The Commissioners having inspected the orchard and garden and part of the farm, took the evidence of Mr. Montgomerie, after which they returned to Port Douglas.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

SATURDAY, 12 JANUARY, 1889.

PORT DOUGLAS DISTRICT.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Chairman announced that Mr. Commissioner Cowley had proceeded to Bribri in order to inspect the mill and machinery, and to inquire into the question of the general state of the plantation, here, also to visit Mr. Hart's selection, leaving Mr. Commissioner King and himself to take evidence.

The evidence of Henry Smith, shipping agent; John Treziss, farmer and selector; Ernest Eglington, Police Magistrate and Polynesian protector; David Peter Thomas (of Messrs. Thomas and Madden), merchant, &c. was taken.

The Commissioners deliberated and decided to leave by steamer for Cairns that evening.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

MONDAY, 14 JANUARY, 1889.

CAIRNS DISTRICT.

The Commissioners having arrived in Cairns on the evening of the 12th instant, proceeded to the Pyramid Sugar Plantation, about seventeen miles from Cairns, to-day.

They inspected the mill, Polynesian hospital, the kanaka and Javanese quarters, interrogated the labourers, and watched them working in the field.

A meeting was then held, all the members of the Commission being present. W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The evidence of William Langdon, the manager of the plantation, was taken and the meeting adjourned.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

TUESDAY,

IX.

TUESDAY, 15 JANUARY, 1889.

CAIRNS DISTRICT.

The Commissioners visited Messrs. Swallow and Derham's Hambleton Plantation. The Commissioners thoroughly inspected the mill, labourers' quarters, hospital, fruit preserving department, and a large portion of the plantation, also the fruit garden and banana field. They went in amongst the cane and saw the labourers at work trashing.

The evidence of Thomas Fulton Swallow, William Henry Swallow, and Denis Dillon was taken. The Commissioners then returned to Cairns.

EVENING SITTING.

IN THE CAIRNS HOTEL.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The evidence of Robert Francis Walker, farmer; Thomas Mackay, selector, Mulgrave Road; John Allan Metcalf, selector, Barron River; and Arthur Mears, commission agent, Herberton, was taken.

A letter was received from Mr. A. J. Draper, Cairns, regretting that he would be absent during the visit of the Commissioners, and tendering a few remarks relative to tropical agriculture in Cairns.

The letter was ordered to be printed as an appendix. [See Appendix.]

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WEDNESDAY, 16 JANUARY, 1889.

CAIRNS DISTRICT.

The Commissioners proceeded by rail to Strathford on the Barron River, where they inspected the rice mill of Messrs. Behan and Co. They subsequently took Mr. Thomas Behan's evidence.

They then crossed the River and inspected William Walker Mason's selection, after which they took his evidence.

They next visited a selection adjoining, on which Chinamen were growing rice.

The Commissioners then drove to the coconut plantation, near Double Island, known as Mount Buchan, and having inspected it, took the evidence of Mr. James Jamieson, manager and part proprietor.

The Commissioners then returned to town.

EVENING SITTING.

IN THE CAIRNS HOTEL.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The evidence of Robert Taylor Hartley, Sub-Collector of Customs, &c.; Isaac Duffin, Crown Lands Ranger for the districts of Cairns and Port Douglas; Archibald Meston, selector, Barron and Russell Rivers; Andrew Leeson, late sugar planter; John Peter Johnston, selector; and William Doyle Hobson, merchant, was taken.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

THURSDAY, 17 JANUARY, 1889.

CAIRNS DISTRICT.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The evidence of Major Fanning, Police Magistrate and Polynesian Inspector; R. T. Hartley (recalled), and John McPherson was taken.

The Commissioners deliberated, and came to the conclusion that in consequence of the great distances they had to travel to obtain evidence, their Secretary having to accompany them to do so, it would be impossible to have the notes transcribed in the necessary time. They decided to send the following telegram

telegram to the Hon. the Chief Secretary:—"Commission getting much valuable evidence, but have to travel and take evidence on plantations, farms, gardens, Secretary has to accompany us and has not time to transcribe his notes. We are obliged to travel by day and then take local witnesses at night. At present we have examined 28 witnesses, and only the evidence of three has been transcribed. It will be impossible for us to do the work satisfactorily before meeting of Parliament unless we have an additional shorthand writer; please send one immediately to meet us at Ingham next week. Reply to Geraldton."

The telegram was signed by all the Commissioners, and despatched.

The Commissioners further deliberated and decided to proceed to Geraldton by the "Palmer," at 10 o'clock that night.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

NOTE.—The Commissioners arrived at Geraldton early the following morning.

SATURDAY, 19 JANUARY, 1889.

JOHNSTONE RIVER DISTRICT.—AT INNISFAIL.

The Commissioners proceeded by boat to Innisfail Plantation. They inspected the mill and cane fields, and took the evidence of Mr. James O'Halloran, acting manager of the estate.

[The Commission then adjourned to meet at Goondi.]

AT GOONDI.

The Commissioners drove out to the Colonial Sugar Company's plantation at Goondi.

The evidence of Charles E. Adams, manager; W. H. Truss, hospital attendant, formerly a ganger; and Patrick Maloney, ganger, was taken.

The mill, plantation, offices, men's quarters, South Sea Islanders' quarters, hospital, reading-room, store, and cane fields were subsequently inspected.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

MONDAY, 21 JANUARY, 1889.

JOHNSTONE RIVER DISTRICT.—AT MOURILYAN.

The Commissioners drove to the Mourilyan Sugar Plantation. They inspected the mill, &c., and took the evidence of R. Russell Snellie, managing partner of the company.

After taking Mr. Snellie's evidence, the Commissioners proceeded by the steam tramway to Mourilyan Harbour, where they inspected the company's wharf and store.

In going to and from Mourilyan the Commissioners passed through and inspected the Queensland Sugar Company's plantation.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

NOTE.—On the 22nd January, Mr. Groom not being allowed by his medical adviser to ride, Messrs. King and Cowley proceeded on horseback to the Basilisk Mountain, and therefrom inspected the country on the south branch of the Johnstone.

WEDNESDAY, 23 JANUARY, 1889.

JOHNSTONE RIVER DISTRICT.—DIVISIONAL BOARD ROOM, GERALDTON.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.

A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meetings were read and confirmed.

The Chairman stated that on arrival in Geraldton he had received the following telegram from the Under Secretary, in reply to the telegram forwarded to the Chief Secretary:—"Your telegram received. Mr. Bernays will leave at once for Ingham to assist your Shorthand Writer."

The following Witnesses were examined:—William Canny, manager of the Queensland Sugar Company's Plantation, Innishowen; Thomas George White, Government medical officer; James Walker Cutten, selector; Martin O'Donohue, Crown Lands Ranger; and S. S. Bowles, Polynesian Inspector.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

FRIDAY,

XI.

FRIDAY, 25 JANUARY, 1889.

JOHNSTONE RIVER DISTRICT.—AT GERALDTON.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of previous meetings were read and confirmed.

The evidence of Geo. Kerr, selector, was taken.

This closed the evidence to be taken in the Johnstone River district, and the Commissioners, after deliberation, resolved to proceed by the s.s. "Palmer," on Friday, to the Herbert River.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

FRIDAY, 25 JANUARY, 1889.

MOURILYAN DISTRICT.

The Commissioners, on arrival at Mourilyan Harbour in the s.s. "Palmer," *en route* for the Herbert River, proceeded to Mr. Smellie's Mourilyan residence, where they took the evidence of J. T. Proctor, who is in charge of Messrs. Seymour and Allan's selection known as Esmeralda.

The Commissioners then re-embarked on the s.s. "Palmer," and proceeded to the Herbert River.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

NOTE.—The Commissioners arrived at Halifax on the 26th January.

MONDAY, 28 JANUARY, 1889.

HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.—AT HALIFAX.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners proceeded to Halifax, where several selections in the district were inspected, and evidence was taken in the Public Hall, when John Alm, M. C. Rosendahl, Chas. Watson, selectors (representatives of the Farmers' Association), and F. Neame, sugar planter, were examined.

The Chairman read the following telegram from the Chief Secretary :—"Chief Secretary would like Commission to visit Yeppoon, near Rockhampton, before returning to Brisbane."

The Commissioners deliberated, and decided to carry out the wishes of the Chief Secretary.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

TUESDAY, 29 JANUARY, 1889.

HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.—AT RIPPLE CREEK.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners inspected Macnade Plantation and the mill.

The Commissioners proceeded to Ripple Creek, where the evidence of the managing partner (Mr. R. M. Boyd) was taken, and the estate, mill, hospital, and quarters inspected.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WEDNESDAY

XII.

WEDNESDAY, 30 JANUARY, 1889.

HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.—AT GAIKLOCH.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners proceeded from Ripple Creek to Gaikloch Plantation, and having inspected the mill, took the evidence of the late manager (Mr. L. J. Cowley).

[AT HAMLIGH.]

The Commissioners then went on to Hamleigh Plantation, and having inspected the plantation and quarters and seen the new system of mole drainage being carried out, took the evidence of the manager (Mr. R. G. Blackmore), and returned to Ingham.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL ROBERTSON, Secretary.

THURSDAY, 31 JANUARY, 1889.

HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.—AT VICTORIA.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners visited the Victoria Plantation, the property of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company; inspected the mill, and took the evidence of the acting manager (Mr. McLean).

The Commissioners also inspected the Central Hospital for Pacific Islanders at Ingham, on their return journey.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL ROBERTSON, Secretary.

FRIDAY, 1 FEBRUARY, 1889.

HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.—DIVISIONAL BOARD ROOM, INGHAM.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners met in the Divisional Board Hall, at Ingham.

The minutes of previous meetings were read and confirmed.

The Commissioners took the evidence of the following Witnesses:—W. C. C. Macdonald, District Medical Officer; W. T. White, Surveyor and Selector; W. S. Warren, Land Commissioner for the Herbert District; and C. A. Foster, Polynesian Inspector.

Samples of English apples, butter, and Kaffir corn, all grown and made in the district, were submitted for the inspection of the Commissioners.

The Commissioners deliberated, and as no further evidence was forthcoming, they decided to proceed to Townsville on the following day.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL ROBERTSON, Secretary.

MONDAY, 4 FEBRUARY, 1889.

AT TOWNVILLE.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire;
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners left Townsville by the 5.40 a.m. train for Woodstock, and proceeded thence by buggy to the Pioneer Plantation, on the Burdekin, a distance of forty miles, where they stopped for the night.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL ROBERTSON, Secretary.

TUESDAY,

XIII.

TUESDAY, 5 FEBRUARY, 1889.

THE BURDEKIN (TOWNSVILLE) DISTRICT.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners inspected the Pioneer Plantation, the irrigation works, as well as the mill and plantation quarters, and proceeded to visit the selections of the farmers. They took the evidence of Wm. Payard, who has initiated irrigation works. They then proceeded to Kalamia Plantation, where they remained for the night.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WEDNESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY, 1889.

BURDEKIN DELTA.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners inspected Kalamia Plantation, and took the evidence of Messrs. Chas. and John Young.

Airdmillan was next inspected, and the evidence of Mr. A. U. McMillan, late managing director, was taken.

The Commissioners proceeded to Seaforth, where irrigation works have been carried on.

They then returned to the Pioneer Plantation, est Ayr, where they took the evidence of Dr. J. T. Williams.

At Pioneer they took the evidence of the manager of Seaforth (Mr. McKenzie), Mr. John Drysdale, (of Drysdale Bros., Pioneer), as well as that of Mr. Louis Hooy.

The Commissioners remained at Pioneer for the night.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

NOTE.—On February 7th, the Commissioners left Pioneer and returned to Townsville.

FRIDAY, 8 FEBRUARY, 1889.

AT TOWNSVILLE.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners met in the Town Hall, Townsville.

The minutes of previous meetings were read and confirmed.

The Commissioners took the evidence of the following Witnesses:—W. V. Brown, of Messrs. Aples, Brown and Co., Limited; Ephraim Cowley, produce merchant; J. A. Wallace, Immigration Agent and Polynesian Inspector; and Wm. Hely, selector. They also received a deputation from the Townsville Pastoral and Agricultural Association.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

SATURDAY, 9 FEBRUARY, 1889.

AT TOWNSVILLE.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners met at the Queen's Hotel, Townsville.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The

XIV.

The evidence of Messrs. F. Goodfellow, land agent; A. E. Douglas, and T. Marron, selectors; and B. Gulliver, nursery gardener, was taken.

This concluded the evidence to be taken in the Townsville district, and the necessary arrangements were made for the Commission to proceed to Mackay.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

NOTE.—The Commissioners arrived at Mackay on Tuesday, 12th instant.

TUESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY, 1889.

MACKEY DISTRICT.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commission met at Wills's Hotel, and received deputations from the Mackay Planters' Association, Farmers' Association, the shareholders of the Central Mills, and the Chamber of Commerce, and arranged the programme for the week's work.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WEDNESDAY, 13 FEBRUARY, 1889.

MACKEY DISTRICT.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commission proceeded to Habana, and on the road visited the River Estate and Richmond Plantations, and Mr. Costelloe's coffee plantation. At Habana the estate and mill were inspected, and the evidence of Mr. John Brackenbury, selector, was taken.

The Commission then visited the selection of Mr. E. Denman, and took his evidence.

They then proceeded to Nindaroo, inspected the mill, and took the evidence of Messrs. C. Dupuy and D. Gladstone, selectors.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

THURSDAY, 14 FEBRUARY, 1889.

MACKEY DISTRICT.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commission proceeded by special train to Eton, where they were met by the manager of Homebush, and driven to the estate.

The mill, kanaka hospital and quarters, and estate having been inspected, the evidence of the following witnesses was taken:—N. Peterson, selector; R. N. Bridgeman, assistant agricultural manager; and O. Matsen, and H. C. Christison, selectors.

On the return journey the North Eton Central Mill and the Victoria and Marian Mills and estates were inspected.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

FRIDAY,

FRIDAY, 15 FEBRUARY, 1889.

MACKAY DISTRICT.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commission visited the Meadowlands Plantation and inspected the estate and mill.

They then proceeded to the Racecourse Central Sugar Mill, which was inspected, and the evidence of the following witnesses taken:—T. Pearce, chairman of directors; C. Kemp, farmer; and H. Josling and W. Landells, directors.

The Commission then inspected Te Kowai, Palmyra, and The Palms Plantations and mills, and proceeded to Branscombe Plantation, where they stopped for the night.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

SATURDAY, 16 FEBRUARY, 1889.

MACKAY DISTRICT.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commission visited and inspected the Ashburton and Farleigh estates and mills, and returned to Mackay.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

MONDAY, 18 FEBRUARY, 1889.

AT MACKAY.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners met at 7:30 a.m., and read and confirmed minutes of previous meetings.

The Secretary was instructed to write to Mr. E. W. Knox, secretary of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, informing him that the Commission desired to take his evidence, and asking when he could be in Brisbane after the first week of March, to do so.

The Secretary was instructed to write to the Secretary of the Planters' Association, Bundaberg, asking him to arrange a programme for the Commissioners visit to the district.

The Commission met again at 10 a.m., and took the evidence of the following Witnesses:—George Ironsides, chairman of directors North Eton Central Mill Company; William Robertson, director North Eton Central Mill Company; Duncan McInnis, secretary North Eton Central Mill Company; William Lyle, manager North Eton Central Mill Company; Wm. Henry Hyne, Meadowlands; Hugh McCreedy, Palmyra; Daniel Sheppard, E. V. Reid, and William Robertson, representatives of Chamber of Commerce; Thomas Ryan, Donald MacDonald, Wm. Bisset, and C. W. Brown, representatives of the Pioneer River Farmers' Association; Joseph Autoney, farmer; Alex. Richard McKenzie, Marian; Walter Freeman Page, Nindaroo, representatives of the Planters' and Farmers' Association; J. M. Costello, farmer; John Temple, farmer; Ed. Stansfield Rawson, Queensland Sugar Estate Company Limited; Frank Charles Hornbrook, Polynesian inspector; and Charles Claudius Innes, land agent.

The Commissioners deliberated, and decided to proceed by steamer that night for Rockhampton.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WEDNESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY, 1889.

AT ROCKHAMPTON.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commission met at the Criterion Hotel.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Commission then examined the following Witnesses:—John Alexander Gavin, late secretary Yeppoon Sugar Company, Limited; Thomas Kelly, chairman Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

THURSDAY,

THURSDAY, 21 FEBRUARY, 1889.

AT ROCKHAMPTON.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire,
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners met at the Criterion Hotel.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Commissioners examined the following Witnesses :—Vivian Voss, medical officer and inspector of Polynesians; William Broome, director Yeppoon Sugar Company, Limited; Henry Ross, manager Yeppoon Sugar Estate.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

NOTE.—The Commissioners proceeded next day by steamer to Bundaberg, *via* Maryborough, and reached Bundaberg on Saturday night.

MONDAY, 25 FEBRUARY, 1889.

BUNDABERG DISTRICT.—AT BUNDABERG.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. B. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners proceeded by buggy to Fairymead Plantation, the property of the Messrs. Young.

The mill and grounds were thoroughly inspected.

The Commissioners then proceeded to Milaquin Refinery, where they were shown over the establishment by Mr. John Cran.

The Commissioners then returned to town.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

TUESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY, 1889.

BUNDABERG DISTRICT.—AT BUNDABERG.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners proceeded by early train to Bingera Station. They were there met by Mr. Angus Gibson, and taken along his private tramway to Bingera Plantation.

There the mill and irrigation works were closely inspected. The Commissioners also visited the school of arts and chapel and school belonging to the plantation.

The Commissioners drove round the district, passing many small selections, farms, and homesteads.

They returned to Bundaberg by special train.

In the afternoon a meeting was held in the Grand Hotel.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Commissioners examined the following Witnesses :—M. Duffy, merchant and ex-mayor; and Hy. St. George Caulfield, Polynesian inspector.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WEDNESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY, 1889.

BUNDABERG DISTRICT.—AT BUNDABERG.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners were driven to the summit of the Hummock, from which they had a good view of the Woongarra Scrub. They proceeded thence to Mr. James Cran's, Dunraggan Plantation, where they inspected his crushing plant.

They

They then proceeded to Mr. Noakes's mill and plantation (Springhill), where the new machinery was inspected.

The Commissioners next drove to Mon Repos, the plantation of Mr. A. P. Barton, where the mill and refinery in course of erection were inspected.

They then drove, *via* Mr. Farquar's Hummock Plantation, to Windermere Plantation (Mr. Nott's). The mill having been inspected, the Commissioners drove to the eastern summit of the Hummock, known as Sir Anthony's Rest. From this spot they had a splendid view of the Woongarra Scrub lying on that side of the Hummock.

The Commissioners subsequently returned to Bundaberg.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

THURSDAY, 28 FEBRUARY, 1889.

BUNDABERG DISTRICT.—AT BUNDABERG.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meetings were read and confirmed.

The Commissioners examined the following Witnesses:—T. P. Pugh, Police Magistrate; Frederick L. Nott, planter, Windermere; Angus Gibson, planter, Bingera, president of the Planters' Association; John Cran (of Messrs. R. Cran and Co.), Millaquin Sugar Refinery; R. Wright, bookseller; W. M. C. Hickson, planter; Edward Turner, farmer; William Woolley, merchant (a member of the Chamber of Commerce); Thomas Alfred Silverwood, draftsman and mechanic; W. N. Atkinson, farmer; Charles Falkner, farmer and planter; H. C. A. Young, planter, Fairymead (Bundaberg Planters' Association).

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

FRIDAY, 1 MARCH, 1889.

MARY RIVER DISTRICT.—AT MARYBOROUGH.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Commissioners took the evidence of the following Witnesses:—Peter Richardson, late manager of Antigua Plantation; Wm. F. Harrington, of Messrs. Walker and Co., Limited; R. Cran, jun., manager, of Yengarie Refinery; John Webber, of Messrs. Webber Brothers; E. G. Porter, planter; F. Bryant, mayor of Maryborough; and Robert Evans.

The Commissioners decided to proceed to Pialba that afternoon.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

FRIDAY, 1 MARCH, 1889.

MARY RIVER DISTRICT.—AT PIALBA.

Present :

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Commissioners took the evidence of Messrs. Anthony Anderson, farmer; A. P. Stevenson, farmer; J. C. Damm, farmer.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

XVIII.

SATURDAY, 2 MARCH, 1889.

MARY RIVER DISTRICT.—AT PIALBA.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners met at 9 a.m.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Commissioners took the evidence of G. A. White, fruit grower.

The Commissioners then proceeded by buggy to Maryborough.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

SATURDAY, 2 MARCH, 1889.

MARY RIVER DISTRICT.—AT MARYBOROUGH.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The evidence was taken by the Commissioners of the following Witnesses:—J. B. Smyth, inspector of Polynesians; R. Hart (of Messrs. Wilson and Hart, sawmillers), Maryborough; and Joseph Whiting.

The Commissioners decided to visit Yangarie Plantation in the afternoon, and to proceed by the s.s. "Fitzroy" to Brisbane on the following morning.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

NOTE.—The Commissioners left Maryborough by the "Fitzroy" on the 3rd March, reaching Brisbane that same evening at 11 p.m.

MONDAY, 4 MARCH, 1889.

AT BRISBANE.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

A letter was received from Mr. F. L. De Coures, Port Douglas, in reference to forming a station for aborigines on the Mossman River. The letter was read, and the Secretary was instructed to forward it to the Chief Secretary, as it did not come within the jurisdiction of the Commission, and to inform Mr. De Coures to that effect.

The Commission deliberated on Mr. F. Griffer's letter asking them to visit his mill at Cudgen, Tweed River, and the Secretary was instructed to write and ask that gentleman what means of conveyance there would be to take them from Nerang to Cudgen.

The Secretary was instructed to write to the Chief Secretary informing him that the Commission might have to visit the New South Wales sugar growing districts, and asking him to take the necessary steps to enable them to do so.

The Secretary was instructed to write and inform Messrs. E. W. Knox and E. B. Forrest that their evidence would be taken on Wednesday, 13th March; and to Messrs. J. Stoddart, G. W. Gray, J. F. Michael, and S. Grimes, asking them to attend at No. 2 Committee Room, Parliamentary Buildings, on Thursday, 14th instant, to give evidence.

It was decided to visit the Rosewood district on Friday, 15th March, and to proceed to the Logan, Albert, and Coomera districts on Monday, 18th March.

The Secretary was instructed to write to the members of the districts named, to inform them of the visit of the Commissioners, and to ask them to kindly make arrangements accordingly.

[The Commission adjourned till Wednesday, 13th March.]

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WEDNESDAY,

WEDNESDAY, 13 MARCH, 1889.

AT THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, BRISBANE.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Secretary submitted the programme drawn up by E. J. Stevens, Esquire, M.L.A., for the visit of the Commission to the Albert and Logan districts. This was agreed to, and the Secretary was instructed to make arrangements accordingly.

The following Witnesses were examined:—Edward William Knox, general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company; and Edward Barrow Forrest, managing director of Messrs. Parbury, Lamb, and Co.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

THURSDAY, 14 MARCH, 1889.

AT THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, BRISBANE.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The following Witnesses were examined:—James Stoddart, merchant, Brisbane; James Munro, manager in Brisbane for the British India and A.U.S.N. Companies; George Wilkie Gray (a member of the firm of Quinlan, Gray, and Co.), merchant, Brisbane; James Simon Michael, late tea planter, Bengal; and Richard Riff, accountant (Smith, Forrester, and Co.), Brisbane.

Mr. A. Woodward, of the Polynesian branch of the Immigration Department, was present at 11 a.m., by request, to give evidence. The Commissioners desiring to examine gentlemen, who had important business engagements to attend to first, requested Mr. Woodward to come again at 2.45 p.m. the same day, and give his evidence.

The Commission met after lunch, and waited for Mr. Woodward till nearly 4 p.m., but he failed to put in an appearance or send an excuse for his absence. The Secretary was instructed to inform the Chief Secretary of this want of courtesy on the part of Mr. Woodward towards the Commission.

The Secretary was instructed to inform the Chief Secretary that, as they had examined Mr. E. W. Knox, general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, it was unnecessary for them to visit any of the plantations in New South Wales.

The Secretary was instructed to write to Mr. Fritz Gfriffer, of Cudgen, Tweed River, to the same effect.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

FRIDAY, 15 MARCH, 1889.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners proceeded by train to Walloon, and thence by buggy to the Rosewood Scrub, where they visited the Woodlands Plantation.

They inspected the mill, plantation, and distillery, and took the evidence of Thomas Lawrence Smith, the managing proprietor.

They returned to Brisbane by special train in the evening.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

MONDAY,

MONDAY, 18 MARCH, 1889.

BRISBANE DISTRICT—MOUNT COTTON.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commissioners proceeded by the 7-30 a.m. train to Beenleigh, which was reached at 9.15 a.m. Here they were joined by E. J. Stevens, Esquire, member for the Albert. The Commissioners proceeded by buggy to Mount Cotton Plantation. There they examined the mill and walked through the cane fields. They examined Henry Heinemann, son of the proprietor.

LOGAN DISTRICT.—EAGLESBY CO-OPERATIVE SUGAR MILL.

The Commissioners drove to Eaglesby Pocket, where they inspected the Eaglesby Co-operative Mill, the property of seven German farmers.

They took the evidence of H. P. Oppermann, managing proprietor.

The Commissioners then returned to Beenleigh, where they remained the night.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL ROBERTSON, Secretary.

TUESDAY, 19 MARCH, 1889.

LOGAN DISTRICT.—AT BEENLEIGH PLANTATION.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commission proceeded by buggy to Beenleigh Plantation, the property of Messrs. Goodn and Davey, and took the evidence of Mr. Francis Gooding.

AT THE JUNCTION PLANTATION.

The Commission then drove to the Junction Plantation, where they examined the mill and took the evidence of the proprietor, Mr. K. Refelt.

AT THE STEGELITZ PLANTATION.

The Commission continued their journey, proceeding to Stegelitz Plantation, situated on Moreton Bay.

The Commission examined the mill, and took the evidence of the proprietor, Mr. A. Kleindsmidt. The Commission drove to the Coomera River Hotel, where they remained for the night.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH, 1889.

LOGAN DISTRICT.—AT OTMOOR PLANTATION.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Commission drove to Otmoor Plantation, where they inspected the mill.

They then drove through the cane field to the manager's (Mr. John Gartside's) residence, and there took his evidence.

They also took the evidence of Mr. J. W. C. Howard, formerly owner of Riverside Plantation Coomera.

ON THE ISLAND, COOMERA RIVER.

The Commission drove to the Coomera ferry, where they were joined by Mr. S. Grimes, M.L.A., who conveyed them by boat down the Coomera to Rockholme, his plantation on Coomera Island.

There they inspected the sugar and arrowroot mills, and while at Mr. Grimes' residence, took that gentleman's evidence.

They also took the evidence of Mr. A. A. Robinson, owner of Helenstale Plantation.

They proceeded back by boat to the Coomera Ferry Hotel.

XXI.

AT SOUTHPORT.

The Commission journeyed by ordinary train the same afternoon to Southport.

The Commission met in Hanlon's Hotel, when the evidence of Mr. Chas. H. Phillpot, part owner of the Buribi Plantation, and Mr. D. F. Fullarton, owner of Bundall Plantation, was taken.

The Secretary was instructed to wire to Mr. A. Woodward, of the Pacific Islanders' Immigration office, requesting him to be in attendance at 10.30 a.m. on Friday, 22nd March, 1889, in No. 2 Committee Room, Parliamentary Buildings, to give evidence.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

NOTE.—The Commissioners left Southport by special train at 2.30 p.m. on the 21st March, reaching Brisbane at 5.20 o'clock that evening.

FRIDAY, 22 MARCH, 1889.

AT THE PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS, BRISBANE.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of previous meetings were read and confirmed.

The Secretary read a letter from the Chief Secretary, inclosing a reply from Mr. A. Woodward, in reference to his non-attendance, when requested to give evidence before the Commission on the 14th March. Mr. Woodward's reply having been read, it was considered by the Commission, and not being deemed satisfactory, the Secretary was instructed to address the Chief Secretary again on the matter, informing him that Mr. Woodward's letter contained no explanation of his conduct, and that it was written in a tone in which they considered no Royal Commission should be addressed.

Mr. A. Woodward's evidence was taken.

The Commissioners deliberated as to the cause of procedure in the future.

It was resolved to adjourn until the 2nd April, in order to give the Shorthand Writers and the Government Printer time to get the evidence and documents printed.

[The meeting adjourned till Tuesday, 2nd April.]

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

TUESDAY, 2 APRIL, 1889.

AT NO. 1 COMMITTEE ROOM, PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Secretary read a letter from J. B. L. Isambert, Esquire, M.L.A., dated Argentine, Star River, 16th March, 1889, stating that absence from home had prevented his making arrangements for the visit of the Commission to the Rosewood district.

The Secretary read a letter from Angus Gibson, Esquire, Bundaberg, containing further information in reference to the cost of making one ton of sugar; and pointing out that the grub which destroys sugar cane can be exterminated by a plentiful supply of water.

The Commissioners considered the letter, and resolved to publish that portion referring to the grub as an appendix. [See Appendix.]

The Secretary read a letter from J. W. Sutton, Esquire, pointing out in detail the effect that the depression in the sugar industry had had upon his business as an engineer.

It was resolved to publish the letter as an appendix. [See Appendix.]

A letter was received from Mr. A. Woodward, of the Pacific Island Office, enclosing a return relative to the voyages made by vessels in the Pacific Island labour trade.

It was resolved that the letter and return be printed as appendices. [See Appendices.]

The Commissioners deliberated as to the drawing up of their report, and it was resolved to adjourn until Friday, 5th April, in order to give the Chairman time to draft his report, and that the Commission meet on the day named to consider it.

[The Commission adjourned till 10.30 a.m. on Friday, 5th April, 1889.]

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

FRIDAY,

FRIDAY, 5 APRIL, 1889.

AT NO. 1 COMMITTEE ROOM, PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Chairman submitted his draft report.

The Commission deliberated, and it was resolved to adjourn till Tuesday, 9th April, to allow Messrs. King and Cowley time to consider the Draft Report.

[The Commission adjourned accordingly.]

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

TUESDAY, 9 APRIL, 1889.

AT NO. 1 COMMITTEE ROOM, PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

A letter was received from Mr. J. Munro, the manager of the A.U.S.N. Company, informing the Commission that his Company were doing all they could to foster the fruit trade of Queensland, and enclosing circulars forwarded to the captains of all vessels belonging to the Company in reference to the handling of fruit, and the usage of the same which occurs during transport.

The letter was read and ordered to be printed as an appendix. [See Appendix.]

The Secretary was instructed to obtain a return showing the export of sugar from Queensland up to 31st March, 1889.

Mr. Commissioner King and Mr. Commissioner Cowley handed in amendments to the Chairman's draft report.

The Commission deliberated on the Draft Report and the draft amendments.

The Chairman stated that he had read through the draft amendments very carefully, and could agree with one or two of the clauses, but the bulk of them he could not agree to, and there seemed to be no alternative but to present a minority report.

The Commission further deliberated and subsequently adjourned till 10:30 a.m. next day.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL, 1889.

AT NO. 1 COMMITTEE ROOM, PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Commission deliberated on the draft report and the draft amendment.

Mr. King moved—"That as there is no prospect of the Commission coming to an agreement upon the subject of inquiry, it is considered advisable to present two reports."

Mr. Cowley seconded the motion.

Carried.

[The Commission adjourned till 4:45 the same afternoon.]

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

WEDNESDAY,

XXIII.

WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL, 1889.

AT NO. 1 COMMITTEE ROOM, PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The Committee met at 4.45 p.m.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The secretary read a communication from the Under Colonial Secretary stating that Mr. A. Woodward of the Pacific Island Labour Office had been censured both for discourteous conduct towards the Commission, and for the tone of his letter of explanation.

Mr. King handed in a report agreed upon by Mr. Cowley and himself.

Mr. King moved—"That the amended report as agreed to by Mr. Cowley and myself be printed."

Mr. Cowley seconded the motion.

Carried.

The Commission deliberated as to the presentation of the Commissioners' report to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government.

[The Commission adjourned till Noon, next day.]

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

THURSDAY, 11 APRIL, 1889.

AT NO. 1 COMMITTEE ROOM, PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Commissioners deliberated upon the draft report of the Chairman, and the amended report brought up by Messrs. King and Cowley.

Mr. King moved—"That the amended report brought by Mr. Cowley and myself be adopted by the Commission, and be presented to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, together with the dissentient report of the Chairman."

Mr. Cowley seconded the motion.

The Chairman refused to put the motion to the meeting, giving as his reason that it was contrary to a resolution previously arrived at—namely, "That two reports should be presented."

Nothing further was done, Mr. King simply declaring that his motion was supported by a majority of the Commissioners.

The Secretary informed the Commissioners that His Excellency the Administrator of the Government would be pleased to receive their Report at Government House on Friday, 12th April, at 11 a.m.

[The Commission adjourned till 10.30 a.m. the following day.]

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

FRIDAY, 12 APRIL, 1889.

AT NO. 1 COMMITTEE ROOM, PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

Present:

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A. | H. E. King, Esquire.
A. S. Cowley, Esquire, M.L.A.

W. H. Groom, Esquire, M.L.A., in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Chairman objects to the term "amended report" as applied to the report brought up by Messrs. King and Cowley, as he considers their report a "new" report.

Mr.

XXIV.

Mr. Cowley moved—"That the reports and evidence now before us be presented to His Excellency the Acting Governor."

Mr. King seconded the motion.

Carried.

The Secretary presented his cash and cheque books.

Mr. King moved—"That they be accepted by the Commission."

Mr. Cowley seconded the motion.

Carried.

The Commissioners proceeded to Government House to present their Report to the Acting Governor.

This concluded the business of the Commission.

The above minutes were read and confirmed.

WILLIAM H. GROOM, Chairman.

WILL. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

1889.

QUEENSLAND.

SUGAR INDUSTRY COMMISSION.

REPORT.

To His Excellency SIR ARTHUR HUNTER PALMER, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, President of the Legislative Council, and Administrator of the Government of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the undersigned Commissioners appointed by letters patent dated the 29th day of November, 1888, "to inquire into and report upon the general condition of the sugar industry in Queensland and the causes which have led to its present languishing condition, and the best means to be adopted for reviving and maintaining its prosperity, and, generally, upon the prospects of tropical agriculture in Queensland," have the honour to lay before your Excellency the following Report:—

1. Immediately upon receiving the letters patent the Commissioners met in the Parliamentary Buildings, Brisbane, and, taking into consideration the great difficulties of travelling in the North during the wet season, and the importance of making a thorough examination of witnesses and inspection of the plantations in the Northern districts, resolved to proceed to Port Douglas and to work from there down to the more Southern portions of the colony. Accordingly we proceeded direct to the Northern districts, and have examined minutely the state of the sugar industry and the condition of tropical agriculture at Port Douglas, Cairns, the Herbert River, the Johnstone River, Townsville, the Delta of the Burdekin, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Maryborough, Rosewood, Logan, Pimpama, and the Coomera, and we examined altogether 154 witnesses, whose names appear in the index.

Districts
inspected, and
witnesses
examined.

2. In the earlier part of our inquiry we discovered that, owing to the great distance at which many of the planters resided from where the Commissioners had agreed to take the testimony of witnesses, it was impossible for them to attend and give evidence; many of them also were absent from the districts, and it was deemed desirable in both cases that the opinion of these planters on the sugar question should be ascertained. We accordingly drafted a series of questions, which will be found in an appendix. These questions, together with a circular letter, were sent to about 285 planters and farmers. Replies were received from 96 of them; and in order that their views should be put in a concrete form, the whole of the answers to the various questions have been summarised in narrative form, and are appended to the evidence.

Evidence of
witnesses
unable to
attend

In order to obtain as complete a volume of evidence as possible we opened communications with the Planters and Farmers' Associations in every district where we could learn that such associations existed, suggesting that those societies should depute members of their body to lay their views upon the subject of our inquiry before us, and we also gave notice at the different places where we sat that we were willing to receive evidence from all persons who had any information on the subject
to

to tender to us, and we did not reject any evidence offered, though it will be apparent that in one or two instances that which was volunteered was of little value. The evidence collected by us is derived, it will be seen, from all classes of the community; of 154 who were examined orally, 17 being Government officials, 45 planters and managers of sugar estates, 53 farmers and selectors, 19 merchants and storekeepers, 5 manufacturers, and 15 of sundry professions and working men.

Extent and
value of sugar
industry

3. Travelling over such a large area of country, and examining such a large number of witnesses, and visiting and inspecting almost every sugar plantation in Queensland, necessarily gave us a very accurate idea of the value of the sugar industry to the colony. The total area of land under cultivation in the colony on the 31st December, 1887, was 205,737 acres, of which 51,815 acres were under sugar cultivation (*vide* statistics of Registrar-General), thus showing that the sugar industry represents one-fourth of the entire area cultivated in the colony. From the evidence obtained, we estimate that the capital invested in the sugar industry of the colony is about £5,000,000 sterling; the machinery alone represents a value of £1,000,000; the annual expenditure is scarcely less than £800,000 sterling; and the value of the sugar exported is about £800,000. The number of white Europeans who are permanently employed in the sugar industry cannot be less than from 2,000 to 3,000; the total number who are more or less directly interested in the industry, and whose livelihood almost depends upon it, cannot be less than double that number; and the officer in charge of the Labour Bureau at Townsville assured us that 70 per cent. of the immigrants were engaged for the plantations, and the number of Polynesians who are engaged in the industry is about 6,000. The wages of the kanakas amount to about £50,000 per annum, whilst that of Europeans, not including managers, would amount to £200,000. In the districts north of Rockhampton the farmers' produce is almost entirely consumed by the plantations, the number of horses that are being worked being enormous, averaging in many instances over a hundred on a single plantation. The effects of the existing depression of the industry have been already felt in the timber trade and in the ironfoundries of the colony, and the prosperity of the important towns of Mackay and Bundaberg is already, to some extent, affected by it. The shipping trade of the colony is also seriously interested in the sugar industry, and its importance in this connection may be judged from the fact that the A.U.S.N. Company's returns for 1888 show a diminution in receipts on the freight of sugar alone of £22,000 (*vide* Mr. Munro's evidence, question 8180), arising from the shortness of the crop of that year, which was occasioned by the drought. And it must also be borne in mind that sugar is the only article of agricultural produce of which any appreciable quantity is exported from the colony. It is therefore apparent that the extinction of this industry, involving, as it would, the loss of so great an amount of capital, the loss of employment to so large a number of our population, and of a market for so much local produce, as well as of an important item in our commercial exchange, must very seriously and prejudicially affect the prosperity of the colony and the welfare of every class in our community.

Depression of
sugar industry.

note 4. Is the sugar industry now depressed, and is its condition such as to justify inquiry and remedial measures? The results of our researches fully justify the appointment of this Royal Commission, and give unmistakable evidence of a serious depression in the industry, and of the necessity of immediately adopting measures for its relief. The most northern plantation is that at Weary Bay, in the Cook district. This year the Commissioners were unable to visit, but they have learned from evidence supplied by the manager that, after the expenditure of £100,000, it is about to be abandoned. The only plantation in the Port Douglas district has ceased operations, and is in the hands of a liquidator. At Cairns there were a few years ago three plantations. One (Hop Wah) is abandoned, and the machinery removed. The others are still at work, but neither are paying interest on the capital invested. Hambleton is still in the hands of the original proprietors, who have invested £180,000 in its development. But the Pyramid Plantation is now in the hands of the mortgagee, the pioneers having had to relinquish it after expending the sum of £130,000. On the Johnstone River there are four plantations. On one the mortgagee has foreclosed, but is still carrying it on. The others, as is shown in the evidence, are not at present paying expenses, notwithstanding the fact that they are in the hands of

of wealthy proprietors and are replete with every appliance for economical working. The Herbert River (Ingham) Plantations are in no better condition, although also in the hands of wealthy proprietors. They are all being worked excepting one (Gairloch), which has lately been sold and is now closed. Another (Hamleigh) has passed from the hands of the original proprietors for one-tenth of its cost. Macaade, lately the property of the Sugar Company, Limited, has been taken over by the mortgagee for a sum of £35,000, although it cost the previous owners over £130,000. The Victoria and Ripple Creek Plantations are still held by their original owners; but, like all the others, fail to give any return on the capital invested. In this district there are eleven farmers who supply from 600 to 700 acres of cane to the Victoria mill. These small growers also suffer from the depression, and are unable to make more than bare working expenses. On the Burdekin Delta there are three plantations in active operation, and another, on which £200,000 has been expended, is now closed. Here the effects of the depression are painfully evident, as two of the three working plantations have lately passed from the hands of the first proprietors, who have lost their all and are now the managers. At Mackay, which has heretofore been regarded as the chief centre of the sugar industry in Queensland, there are 22 plantations with mills, a large number of farmers growing cane, and two Government Central Mills. Here, for the season ending 31st March, 1887, 16,138 tons of sugar were manufactured, while 16,062 tons were made the following year, but during the 1888-9 season the falling-off was very great, only about 5,500 tons being produced. Evidence went to show that in no single instance either amongst farmers or planters was a profit being made, all the plantations being carried on at a loss. The town of Mackay itself is most seriously depressed in its trade and general business, and from the evidence of the commercial men there it was quite apparent that the whole of the towns people seriously felt the depression which rests on the sugar industry of that district. In 1887 the exports were £304,322 of which £284,820 worth was sugar, and in 1888 they had fallen to £137,529 of which £112,540 worth was sugar. The imports for these periods were £125,730 and £91,128 respectively, and the import of flour, which in 1887 was 1623 tons, fell to 769 tons in 1888. These statistics were furnished by the Sub-Collector of Customs at Mackay, and very clearly demonstrate the serious effects of the depression in the sugar industry upon the trade of the port. At Rockhampton there is only one plantation (Yeppoon) now in existence, the Pandora Mill having been closed some time since. The Yeppoon plantation is in liquidation, and was sold for £10,500 during the visit of the Commission to that district. About £40,000 had been expended upon it. At Bundaberg the condition of affairs is somewhat different. There there are forty plantations, twenty-two manufacturing plants, fourteen crushing mills, seventeen small growers of cane, and one sugar refinery. This district bears evidence of a certain amount of prosperity, and it was shown that in twelve instances interest ranging from 2 to 11 per cent. was paid on capital invested. In all other cases more or less loss was the result of the year's work, and planters and farmers alike were beginning to feel the effects of the depression, and were looking forward to the future with anxiety. The Messrs. Crau's Millaquin refinery represents a capital of £150,000, and an annual expenditure of nearly £60,000; and from the excellent system it possesses for bringing juice from the planters' crushing mills to the refinery has contributed largely to the success of the cane growers in the past, and will no doubt do so in the future. That the prosperity of Bundaberg largely depends upon the sugar industry, is borne out by the official statistics of 1888, the total exports for that year being £362,500, of which £305,422 was for sugar alone. The depression at Maryborough was most marked, as shown by a return furnished by the honorary secretary of the Planters' Association of a list of twelve plantations now closed. The aggregate area of these plantations was 2,860 acres, and the estimated value of the machinery now lying idle, £49,600, while an additional £25,000 worth is only being partially used. The primary cost of putting those 2,860 acres into cultivation and erecting machinery on the various plantations now out of use was £128,330. At one time the export of sugar from Maryborough ranged from 5,000 to 6,000 tons; it has now fallen to 1,500 tons, notwithstanding that at Yengarie there are large manufacturing works similar to Millaquin, in which £100,000 has been invested, and which is capable of manufacturing from 4,000 to 5,000 tons of refined sugar in the season.

On the Logan
River.

In the Logan district we found many of the older plantations abandoned, but many of the smaller ones are still in existence and are growing cane, in some cases profitably, and in others affording the owners only a bare subsistence. The co-operative principle, judging from the experiment which has been made at Eaglesby, appears to have been to a certain extent successful, and the Germans, who have established a co-operative mill there and who have worked it for the past seven years, are perfectly satisfied with what they have done in the past and with their prospects for the future. At the Coomera, at Mr. Grimes's plantation, a similar hopeful condition prevails, and Mr. Grimes is so satisfied with his past efforts and his prospects for the future that he intends to place forty acres more under cane. The foregoing will, we think, show beyond any doubt that the sugar industry on the whole is very much depressed and its existence as an industry seriously imperilled from a variety of causes.

At Coomera.

Causes assigned
for depression.

5. The causes assigned for the depression, as will be gathered from the evidence, are numerous and varied. They comprise mismanagement, extravagance and inexperience of planters in the early days of the industry, financial embarrassment owing to working on borrowed capital, losses through unfavourable seasons, disease, exhaustion of the soil, fall in the price of sugar, and loss of confidence in the industry, which, it is alleged, is owing to the abolition of black labour in the near future, and which prevents planters obtaining the necessary advances to carry them on.

Mismanage-
ment,
extravagance,
and
inexperience of
planters.

6. Whilst we admit that amongst the large number of persons engaged in sugar planting, there have been some (as there are in all other industries) whose failure may be attributable to their own incompetence or recklessness, we feel bound to state that the great body of the planters are in no way liable to such a charge. On the contrary, we should give them credit for careful study of all new inventions and discoveries by which the progress of their industry may be assisted, and for remarkable enterprise in introducing every improvement, the value of which has been established. In proof of this we may point to the work of the Messrs. Swallow at Hambleton Plantation, where they are supplementing their sugar works by the creation of a large fruit-preserving establishment, which promises to be most successful, and to be a great benefit to the Northern fruit-growers. They also employ in sugar-making two patents of their own, one for cutting the cane up before it comes to the rollers, thus equalising and regulating the feed, and another process for the treatment of the juice. All of the operations in the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's mills are carefully watched and the results tested by chemists, who ascertain the amount of sugar in the cane, and the quantity obtained, and endeavour to prevent all waste. We have to thank Mr. Sinellie, the managing director of the Mourilyan Sugar Company for valuable information respecting the progress of sugar making in the United States, contained in recent publications which he kindly lent to us, and we saw in the nursery of that plantation a few stools of the new Borneo cane recently introduced by him from Java. This cane is said to contain 22.6 per cent of crystallisable sugar, whilst ordinary cane contains only from 12 to 18 per cent., and the improved varieties of beetroot cultivated in Europe contain only 20 per cent. As the competition of beet with cane sugar, which has so seriously depreciated the value of the latter was only rendered possible by the great improvement in the sugar producing qualities of the beetroot, we consider that the Queensland planters would be moving in the right direction when they turned their attention to the discovery of a variety of cane surpassing even the improved beetroot in its yield of sugar, and we regret that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, which had planted fifty acres of this cane at Goondi, becoming alarmed by the report of a disease existing amongst the cane in Java, deemed it advisable to plough out and burn the plants.

In the Burdekin Delta also the sugar planters have taken the lead by establishing a system of irrigation, which, if it were generally adopted throughout the colony in those localities where a supply of water is available, would very much lessen the losses which are so often sustained through protracted drought. Again, the refineries owned by the Messrs. Cran at Maryborough and Bundaberg, in which sugar is made by a patent process, have done much towards making the growth of sugar cane profitable in those districts.

We

We therefore consider that, instead of the depression of the sugar industry being attributable to the ignorance and incapacity of the planters as a body, they have, on the contrary, shown great enterprise, directed by careful study of their work. The machinery on all the large plantations in the Northern districts is of the newest and best description, double crushing being almost universal and maceration generally practised. As an idea prevails in some quarters that the Queensland planters are behind the times, owing to their not having adopted the diffusion method of manufacture, we may direct attention to the results of an experiment tried in Demerara, particulars of which are published in "Sugar Cane" of December 1st, 1888. Two lots of cane of 100 tons each were treated, the one by diffusion and the other by double crushing and maceration. By diffusion 19,344 lbs. of sugar and 717 gallons of molasses were obtained, whilst double crushing and maceration yielded only 18,304 lbs. of sugar and 679 gallons of molasses, the value of the yield being \$40.20 in favour of diffusion. But the additional fuel required for the diffusion process cost \$75.12, the net return being therefore \$34.92 more by maceration than by diffusion. Mr. Knox, the general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, which has a diffusion mill on the Richmond River, appears to be in some doubt as to whether that process would here yield a larger money return than the present process, though it would undoubtedly yield more sugar. (Questions 8200-5.) It is worth while here to draw attention to the fact that the average return of sugar this year in the Northern districts was about one ton of sugar for ten tons of cane. At Mourilyan plantation the average was one ton of sugar for 9.90 tons of cane, or at the rate of 22,624 lbs. of sugar for 100 tons of cane, being 3,280 lbs. of sugar more than was obtained in Demerara by diffusion from 100 tons of cane. We consider, therefore, that we are justified in finding that the depression in the industry is not caused by any defect in the machinery used, or to mismanagement or ignorance.

7. There is no doubt that a large number of planters are at present seriously embarrassed through inability to pay the interest on borrowed capital invested in their plantations, the working expenses having generally during the last two years exceeded the value of their produce, and there is reason to believe that many of them retain their position as nominal owners of their properties solely owing to the inability of the banks and other mortgagees to realise on their properties under present circumstances. It seems to us, however, that this embarrassment is an effect rather than the cause of the depression. Most persons who embark in business of any description in the colony avail themselves largely of their credit, and there is no reason why a sugar planter, any more than a squatter or any person carrying on any other business, should not obtain the assistance of borrowed capital. At the time when the great advance in sugar planting in Queensland took place the price obtained for the product gave so large a profit that the planters had every prospect of not only paying interest on these advances but of soon repaying them. The changed condition of the industry by converting this profit into a loss has produced the embarrassment now existing. It must be borne in mind, too, that even if the planters themselves owned all the capital invested they could not be expected to continue to grow sugar at an annual loss in working expenses as well as of all interest on capital, and, in fact, planters who are in this position have stated to us their intention to give up the industry before they have exhausted all their resources unless some change in its prospects shall appear.

8. The last year being a season of prolonged drought has, no doubt, caused severe loss to the sugar planters as well as to all other agriculturists and to the pastoral industry. This cause of loss, however, does not affect sugar planters only. All persons engaged in any agricultural pursuit must expect occasionally to sustain loss through adverse seasons, and in those pursuits the profits of the good years must be expected to balance the losses of unfavourable ones. Even before this drought, too, the sugar industry was failing, and the losses occasioned by it have simply increased the depression which had commenced before. We are glad to report that we have heard of no disease in the cane at present. The last year's crop in the Northern districts suffered, however, considerably from the ravages of a grub, the multiplication of which appears to be favoured by drought, as the Northern planters stated that it was always worst in dry seasons, whilst Mr. Angus Gibson, of Bingera, near Bundaberg, has discovered that irrigation destroys it. There is no

reason

Financial
embarrassment
through working
on borrowed
capital.Unfavourable
seasons, disease
in cane,
exhaustion of
soil.

reason to believe that exhaustion of the soil has as yet affected the yield of sugar, except, perhaps, in the Maryborough district; in the rich scrub lands of the Northern districts it will take many years to exhaust the stores of vegetable mould, and in other places a proper system of manuring the ground is already being initiated. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company, on its Herbert River Plantation, uses large quantities of imported chemical manures, with different kinds of which it is experimenting. The general depression in the sugar industry is, therefore, due to causes altogether outside of those treated of in this paragraph, which can only be considered as accidental aggravations of it.

9
Fall in price
of sugar.

9. Since 1883 sugars of all classes have fallen in price fully 50 per cent., and there can be no doubt that this fall, which is likely to be permanent, has been a principal cause of the depression of the sugar industry in Queensland. That is to say, that if sugar had maintained its price the plantations in the colony would have well paid their owners, instead of ruining them. But if sugar can be grown and made in other countries at a profit even at present prices, why not in Queensland? No country in the world can have a soil and climate better adapted for the growth of the sugar cane than the districts north of Townsville; very few, we believe, have any equal to them. We have already drawn attention to the fact that 100 tons of cane on the Johnstone River gives by double crushing and maceration nearly a ton and a-half more sugar than an equal quantity of cane treated by diffusion at Demerara; and Mr. Knox states that Queensland cane is much sweeter than that grown in Fiji. We are nearer, too, to the Australian markets than any foreign producers, and therefore in those markets we should be able to compete with them. To ascertain the reasons why we cannot do so seems, therefore, to be the object of this inquiry.

Loss of
confidence by
capitalists,
owing to
proposed
withdrawal of
black labour.

10. It is alleged that one principal cause of the present depression of the industry is the refusal of capitalists to assist planters to tide over the losses occasioned by the late unfavourable seasons, such refusal being due to the fact that by "*The Pacific Islanders Act of 1885*," section 11, the importation of these islanders is to cease on the 31st December, 1890. It is, no doubt, true that advances cannot now be obtained on sugar properties because capitalists do not at present see a prospect of sugar-growing being carried on profitably in the future, and it is probable that one reason why they do not believe in its future success is that, in their opinion, it cannot be profitably carried on without a supply of cheap coloured labour. It is evident, however, that the willingness of capitalists to advance to sugar-growers will depend on their opinion of the prospect of profitably carrying it on, and that if they were satisfied that it could be carried on profitably without black labour they would be just as willing to make advances under these conditions as if black labour was to be employed. We postpone any expression of opinion as to whether sugar can be profitably grown without black labour until we come to discuss the remedies proposed for the existing depression. At the present time, however, it must be borne in mind that the cost of black labour in the colony has increased by more than 50 per cent. since 1883, and we find that this increase in working expenses, concurring with a great fall in the price of sugar and unfavourable seasons, has caused the working expenses of the plantations generally to exceed the value of their produce; this result, with no better prospect in the future, naturally alarming capitalists, and causing them to refuse the accommodation required to carry on with.

3
Prospect of
the industry.

11. It is clear that unless by some means the production of sugar can be rendered profitable in Queensland the entire extinction of the industry must come about in time—and in a very short time, we fear. A rise in the price of sugar in the markets of the world is scarcely to be looked for, as other countries are fostering and encouraging the extension of the industry by every means in their power, and the supply has already more than overtaken the demand. At the present time the United States of America, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, and Holland, are all engaged in the production of sugar, and are adopting every means, scientific and otherwise, to encourage its culture and to assist its progress. Large plantations in the Sandwich Islands are owned almost exclusively by Americans, and the output of sugar from those islands is very large indeed. The American Government have for some time past, through the medium of their agricultural department, been making

making a number of experiments with the view of testing the adaptability of sorghum as a sugar-growing plant, and the latest reports which were laid before the Sugar Convention held in London in August of last year went to show that it was fully anticipated that the State of Kansas alone would, in the course of time, produce a yield of 500,000 tons of sugar from sorghum. Mr. Spreckles, who is one of the largest owners of plantations in the Sandwich Islands, has now erected a large beetroot sugar manufactory at San Francisco, and is not only cultivating a large area of beetroot himself, but has also offered special inducements to the farmers to grow beetroot for him, and a very large area has been placed under cultivation with the sugar beetroot. In fact, every effort is being put forth by the United States Government and people to grow as much sugar as possible, in order to keep down importations, and hence the reason why the United States Government declined to be officially represented at the recent international conference in London on the sugar question. It appears to us that the effect of the bounty system upon sugar production is not sufficiently estimated by the general public, or by those engaged in the sugar industry. Undoubtedly it is the means of giving an immense amount of employment, both in the field and the factory, to the large populations of France, Germany, Austria, and other Continental nations; and these countries are prepared to make unusual sacrifices in order to keep up the sugar industry, and to encourage as much as possible large exports of sugar. What the Continental nations are now doing in order to foster the industry may be gathered from the following extract from a speech of Baron de Worms, one of the representatives of England at the Sugar Convention, and who was elected its president, delivered at Greenock on the 1st of last November. The right honourable gentleman said:

"The following figures will show the sacrifices foreign countries make in order to maintain the bounty system. Bounties cost France £3,380,000, Germany £3,238,484, Austria £1,036,667, Belgium £813,000, Holland £309,655. In Germany this amounts to £5 per ton on the quantity exported, in France to £8 per ton on the quantity manufactured, in Austria to £3 per ton on the quantity exported, in Belgium to £8 per ton on the quantity exported, and in Holland to £3 per ton on the quantity exported. Why do foreign governments make these tremendous sacrifices? The answer is very simple. Their object has been, and is, to develop by artificial means their own sugar industry, and the artificial means they adopt are the State subsidies. Against whom is this artificial competition aimed? Against the cane sugar producer of the British colonies, and the refiner of the British towns. It is impossible to suggest any other reason for the existence of sugar bounties in foreign countries, inasmuch as the great sugar market of the world is England, and that the only means by which foreign countries could hope to compete with or to destroy the British sugar industry was by giving an advance to their producers and refiners—a profit far away greater than the legitimate profit which could be earned in the ordinary course of trade."

The foregoing indicates the enormous sacrifices which Continental nations are making in order to foster and encourage the production of sugar from beetroot, and it is against this article that the sugar growers of Queensland have largely to contend; and the question must suggest itself to everyone, "If this industry is so important and profitable to the country that it is worth while for the European powers to make such sacrifices to create and maintain it, must it not be worth our while to do a good deal to support the industry already established in this colony?" We are aware that the precise accuracy of Baron de Worms' figures given above has been disputed, but we have no means of deciding whether they are absolutely correct or not, and a trifling alteration in them would not affect the inference we draw from them.

12. The remedies suggested by the various witnesses for the amelioration of the condition of the sugar industry, briefly summarised, are as follow:—

- (a) The erection of central mills, and the subdivision of the large sugar estates into small farms to be cultivated by the families of the settlers on them;
- (b) The negotiation of a reciprocity treaty whereby Queensland sugars might be admitted duty free into the other Australian colonies;
- (c) The adoption of a comprehensive irrigation scheme; and
- (d) The repeal of the 11th section of "*The Pacific Islanders Act of 1885*," thereby permitting the importation of kanaka labour to continue, its introduction and distribution to be taken into the hands of the Government, but to be at the cost of the employers.

13. As

Smile

Beetroot cultivation in United States

Bounty system in Europe

Remedies suggested.

to

Central mills.

See Appendix
evidence,
page 267.

13. As many of the small farmers who gave evidence before us appeared to consider that by the establishment of central mills, which could be supplied with cane by small cultivators, sugar growing and manufacturing might be profitably carried on, we gave great attention to this point and learnt that many attempts have been made to carry out this system with very indifferent success. In fact, the only case in which any success has attended it is at Eaglesby Pocket, on the Logan River, where in 1881 seven German farmers purchased a small mill which they have worked ever since. They cultivate about ten acres of cane each, and buy as much more as they can get from their neighbours, paying 8s. 6d. per ton for it delivered at the rollers, and they state that the growers are satisfied with this price, though in the Northern districts the farmers are dissatisfied with 10s. and 11s. a ton paid by the planters' mills. Last year this co-operative company crushed 900 tons of cane and made 67 tons of sugar. Although, therefore, they have now nearly cleared off the original debt on their mill, yet it does not appear that the result has led to any extension of the cultivation of cane in their neighbourhood—in fact, they state that it is decreasing. At the Coomera, where Mr. Howard established a central mill, he was unable to get it supplied with cane by the farmers, and the same result attended Mr. T. L. Smith's enterprise at Rosewood. Mr. Gooding, who wished to work his mill at Beenleigh as a central mill, could not get the farmers to undertake to grow a sufficient quantity of cane for it; and the Urangan Company, in the Maryborough district, failed also, and the machinery is now removed. In almost every district which we have visited the planters have stated that it is their wish to work as manufacturers only, and that if they could only get farmers to grow the cane they would gladly give up cultivation and let their estates in small farms, but that they are unable to get farmers to agree to grow cane. The reason for this is, we think, not far to seek. To grow cane, a farmer must have some small capital in hand. When growing any other article of agricultural produce he may expect to receive some return in six months after planting, but from cane he can get none within twelve, or, in some cases, eighteen months. To grow sufficient to keep a central mill going will require a capital at least equal to that invested in the mill, and generally considerably more. For instance, a mill costing £20,000 erected should be able to turn out 2,000 tons of sugar per annum, and to supply the cane to make that amount, 2,000 acres of land should be under cultivation, 1,500 acres to crush each year and 500 acres fresh planted to take the place of the old ratoons to be ploughed out each year. But to cultivate that area of land properly a capital of at least £10 per acre is required, or, if the land were scrub, which had to be cleared, £20 per acre. It is impossible to find any small number of farmers all residing within reach of one mill who can undertake such an outlay, and if the mill be not fully supplied with cane failure is the result. The Colonial Sugar Company, both at Mackay and on the Herbert River, and also Mr. Long, at Mackay, have succeeded in getting a small number of farmers to grow cane for their mills, but in both these instances the mill owners assist the farmers by making advances on their growing crops. The working of the two Government central mills at Mackay, which we carefully investigated, shows very clearly that no industry can be established, even by grants of public money, unless it be conducted on proper business principles.

In the North Eton Central Mill Company a number of small farmers residing near Eton agreed to take shares to the amount of £20,375, they not paying the money, but mortgaging their lands to the Government for that amount, the Government advancing the money to enable them to erect the mill. The Government eventually increased the advance to £25,000, of which £20,777 has been paid to the directors of the company, and £4,223, which the directors admit to be due to the liquidators of the Crystalbrook Sugar Company, from whom the machinery was purchased, is still lying in the Treasury, ready to be handed over to the liquidator if he will accept it in full discharge of his claim. He, however, demands a larger amount, and legal proceedings have been commenced, which, if they should result unfavourably to the company, would make them liable for a very considerable sum in excess of this amount, and the remainder of the £25,000 is all spent. At the time when the Government agreed to advance this £25,000 on the security of the shareholders' lands, the shareholders were not all freeholders, but a considerable number were selectors, whose lands would soon become freehold. Two of this latter class became entitled to their deeds last year, and by some oversight the deeds

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were issued to them without any endorsement of the encumbrance upon them, and they immediately pledged these deeds to a bank as security for advances then made to them. One of these men was the largest shareholder in the company, and by this transaction the Government has lost nearly one-third of the nominal security which it held. The sugar-making capacity of this mill is supposed to be from 1,500 to 2,000 tons of sugar in a season, but only 450 acres of cane were guaranteed to be cultivated to supply it. It was worked this year as an experiment, the directors state, and it crushed all the cane off the shareholders' land and purchased some more, and made 100 tons of sugar, which realised net from £12 to £13 per ton, the cost for cane and working of mill being £1,500. To complete the mill so as to render it capable of working to its full capacity, the engineer states that a further expenditure of £2,000 is required, whilst the directors agree that in order to get a sufficient supply of cane to the mill it will be necessary to construct ten miles of tramway, connecting the growers with the mill, and for this purpose application has been made to the Treasury for a further loan of £10,000. It is suggested that if this loan were granted a number of settlers, who are not now shareholders, might be induced to take shares and mortgage their lands to the Government as additional security; but in face of the fact that the company pays its own shareholders only 10s. per ton for cane, whilst it gives outsiders 13s., we can scarcely think that this expectation will be realized. No balance sheet has ever been prepared, as provided for by the articles of association, and no estimate of ways and means for the ensuing season, and the Secretary assured us that he had no idea of when the charge for interest on the money advanced by the Government was to commence, and had never received any notice or any communication whatever on the subject from the Treasury. At present, whilst the mill is not working the Company is paying an engineer £300, and a secretary £100 per annum. The Racecourse Central Mill, we are glad to say, has been conducted in a much more business-like manner. The shareholders obtained an advance from the Government of £21,000, on the same terms on which the advance to the North Eton Company was made. Of this sum £19,000 was expended on the mill, which for its capacity is one of the best, and certainly the cheapest that we saw. It was not worked this season, as the amount of cane that the shareholders had was so small that it could only have been worked at a loss. The only expense of the company when not crushing is the salary of the secretary, £130 per annum. The books appeared to be correctly kept, and a balance-sheet was shown to us. The amount of interest due to the Treasury was £1,500, which had not been paid, as, if it were, the Company would have no funds left to commence the next season with, and the directors hoped that under the circumstances they would not be pressed for it. Everything in connection with this mill was creditable to the management, but yet we regret to say that we have no expectation that the shareholders will be able to carry it on—nor do they expect it themselves. By their articles of association this company can only pay its shareholders 8s. 6d. per ton for cane delivered at the mill, whilst it is offering 14s. per ton to outsiders, and growing cane at 8s. 6d., the shareholders must be soon ruined, for there is no prospect of any profit remaining to be divided among them after payment of interest on the Government advance—nor even of their being able for the next few years, at all events, to pay that interest.

In connection with both of these mills we feel bound to notice that the experiment, to try which Parliament voted the money for their construction, is not being, in our opinion, fairly made. It was, we think, understood that this money was granted for the purpose of trying whether sugar could be profitably grown with white labour. But both of these mills are now purchasing kanaka-grown cane. The Eton mill last year bought it at 13s. a ton, when it was only giving its own shareholders, who grew it with white labour, 10s., and this year the Racecourse Mill is offering 14s. per ton to growers who employ kanakas, while its own shareholders can only get 8s. 6d. per ton. Even if these mills could make a sufficient profit out of the purchase of kanaka-grown cane to maintain the companies in existence, that would not demonstrate what was intended to be demonstrated—that white labour could be profitably employed in the cultivation of sugar cane; it was never doubted that white labour could be profitably employed in manufacturing sugar out of cane grown by black labour. It was also to be expected that these mills by thus working would enable the farmers to judge correctly of the cost of making

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making sugar, and perhaps disabuse their minds of the idea that the planters were making an undue profit by the purchase of their cane at the current rates. If, however, these mills pay no interest on their cost, it is evident that the planter who has to pay interest on the cost of his machinery cannot give as high a price as they can, and it is already a subject of complaint that they are closing some of the private mills, by offering a higher price for cane than anyone who did not get his capital for nothing could afford to pay—that, in fact, instead of paying the interest on the cost of the mills to the Government, they are dividing it amongst the growers of the cane. It will be noticed that in estimating the cost of manufacture of sugar the directors of these companies take no account of the interest on the cost of their plant, though that must inevitably be the largest item of expense.

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We are of opinion that the experiment tried with these mills has not been a success, and does not promise to be one—in fact, unless further subsidies are granted to them, they must inevitably be closed before long. We agree, however, that it would be best for both large and small capitalists that the business of manufacturing sugar should be separated from the cultivation. But that cannot be effected in a day, nor by any Act of the Legislature. It is a change which will gradually work itself out. If sugar-growing continues to be a Queensland industry, the soil of the large plantations will by degrees be parcelled out among small farmers who will undertake to grow cane according to a fixed scale of prices for the mills attached to the land, and the large planter will become simply a manufacturer.

Reciprocity.

14. If Queensland sugars could be admitted duty free into the colonies of Victoria and South Australia, our planters would profit by an increase of about £3 per ton in price until their production exceeded the requirements of those colonies, and this would be a great assistance to their industry, no doubt; but any concession made to us by those colonies in this direction would have to be paid for by some equivalent granted to them, and until we know what that equivalent would be, it is impossible for us to say whether such an arrangement should be made.

Irrigation.

in districts
15. Whether sugar-growing is to continue the principal branch of our agricultural industry or not, irrigation is in this climate an absolute necessity, if any agricultural pursuit is to be attended with a reasonable chance of profit.

Black labour.

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16. We come now to the consideration of the question whether the employment of black labour is necessary to render the cultivation of sugar profitable. We are aware that there are political and social considerations which will have to be weighed by the Legislature when dealing with this question, but with those we do not meddle; we are appointed merely to discover the causes of the present depression in the sugar industry and a remedy if possible for it, and we shall therefore discuss this question solely with reference to that industry, leaving it to your Excellency's advisers and to the Legislature of the colony to decide how far the requirements of that industry can be met without prejudice to the general interests of the colony. In answering this question, "Can sugar be profitably grown in Queensland without the employment of cheap coloured labour?" we must divide the colony into two sections, North and South, taking Townsville as the boundary between the two. In the districts north of Townsville all the cultivated land, except a small quantity on the south side of the Herbert River, is scrub of the richest description, which after felling and burning has to be cultivated with the hoe for six or seven years until the stumps have rotted out, when horse implements can be used.

In this district there was absolute unanimity amongst all the witnesses examined that white men could not cultivate cane. Putting on one side altogether the evidence of planters and employers of labour who have tried to get field work done by white labour ineffectually, we find the small selectors all telling the same tale. At Port Douglas Mr. Jones says, "Europeans will not cultivate with the hoe" (Question 56). "Withdrawal of black labour means shutting up Northern districts" (215). Mr. Johnston says, "Five months in the year whites cannot work" (4-5). Neither white men nor horses can do the same work as in the South (528-535), and he gives as a proof of this the result of a contract for clearing with which he was connected (556). Mr. J. J. Montgomery, the most successful selector at Port Douglas, says, "The scrub must be cleared before white men can cultivate profitably" (774-5). Mr. Tresize says that he could not cultivate cane with his family (847). Mr.

Walker,

Walker, an old settler on the Downs, who is now on the Mulgrave, says, "White men do not work well at cultivation on his farm" (1407). Mr. Mackay says, "I cannot do the same amount of work as in the South" (1498). Mr. W. H. Truss, an employé on Goondi Plantation, would not do weeding or trashing (2708), and Patrick Moloney, a ganger in charge of kanakas there, would leave the place before he would do it (2738). Whilst we were at Geraldton the Divisional Board labourers declined to work until the weather got cooler (3029-31); and George Kerr, a selector, says that those who once were against black labour there, are now in favour of it (3346), and that he would not weed, trash, or cut cane; and the Herbert River farmers tell the same tale.

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In the districts south of Townsville a different condition exists. Here white labourers can work without such great danger to life or health, but they dislike the hand work in the field so much that they will not willingly undertake it and never continue at it long, and then the question arises whether, though they can do the work, it can be done by them profitably. In considering this question we must look to the market which our sugar growers have and the competition which they have to meet in it. In a good season three-quarters of the crop of Queensland sugar is exported, chiefly to the Melbourne market, and one-fourth is consumed in the colony. In Melbourne, that which is exported comes into free competition with the sugars from Mauritius, Java, and China, which, the European market being flooded with beet sugar, are now thrown upon the Australian market, and the price of our sugar is therefore brought down to the level at which they can afford to sell theirs. Even for that portion of the crop which is sold in this colony growers do not get the full benefit of the protective duty of £5 per ton, the price in the colony being governed to a considerable extent by that obtainable for the export, but they net on an average, perhaps £2 per ton more for the sugar sold in the colony than for that exported. And the price for the exported portion of the crop is governed by the cost at which the foreign producer can afford to place his sugar on the Melbourne market. Now, in the Mauritius, sugar is grown by coolies whose wages are a shilling a day without rations; in Java the cost of labour is sixpence a day, and in China probably less, whilst in Fiji again coolies are employed at one shilling per working day. In Queensland, however, at the present time, allowing for the cost of introduction fees payable under the Pacific Islanders Act, wages, rations, and all other expenses, it is calculated that kanaka labour (indentured) costs about sixteen shillings per week, or considerably more than even the European labourers employed in the production of beet sugar receive. If it were not that the soil and climate of Queensland is particularly adapted to the growth of sugar, it would clearly be impossible to continue the competition even on those terms. Even as it is, any increase in the cost of production means the destruction of the industry. And the employment of white labour for hand work in the field, even if it could be obtained, would mean a very great increase in cost. It will be seen by the evidence that most of those witnesses who thought that sugar could be grown with white labour were careful to explain that it could only be grown by settlers working solely with the help of their families, and not employing hired labour. Even a number of the shareholders in the Government central mills at Mackay expressed themselves satisfied that sugar could not be grown with white labour, and repented having signed the conditions on which the money for these mills was granted to them, and the only instances in which we found sugar successfully grown with white labour, at the present time, were at three small mills in the Logan district, belonging to German settlers who seldom employed hired labour, and at the plantation of Mr. S. Grimes, M.L.A., on the Coomera. Mr. Grimes's success, however, may be accounted for by the fact that, situated as he is in a populous district, his labour costs him less than a Northern planter has to pay for his kanakas, since Mr. Grimes has not to keep his men during the slack season, but gets them only when, keeps them only as long as, their labour is necessary, and in addition to this he has, of course, a great advantage over the Northern planter in freights and cost of all supplies.

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From the evidence laid before us, therefore, we have come to the conclusion that even in that part of the colony lying south of Townsville sugar cannot be grown profitably, at least for export, without the employment for hand work in the field of a class of labour cheaper and more suitable for the work than white labour.

Recommendations.

17. After full consideration of the subject, therefore, we have the honour to submit the following recommendations for the improvement of the condition of the sugar industry :—

- note*
- (1.) We recommend that the Government should make inquiry in Java and Borneo about the qualities of the cane of which small quantities were imported by the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. and the Mourilyan Sugar Co., and if satisfied that it is as valuable as it is represented to be, should procure a shipment of plants sufficient to plant twenty or thirty acres of land in a nursery which, to avoid all danger of importing any disease, should be established on one of the islands on our Northern coast—say one of the Palm Islands or Fitzroy or Dunk Island.
 - (2.) We recommend that your Excellency's advisers should open negotiations with the colonies of Victoria and South Australia, for the purpose of ascertaining on what terms and conditions (if any) those colonies could admit Queensland sugars duty-free.
 - (3.) We recommend that assistance should be given either to public bodies or to individuals to enable them to provide means of irrigating all cultivated lands in localities where a sufficient supply of water can be obtained.
 - (4.) We declare it to be our opinion that if all coloured labour be withdrawn from the plantations the extinction of the sugar industry must speedily follow, and we therefore recommend that the introduction of Polynesian labour be permitted to continue, at all events for some years longer than the period now limited.

Tropical agriculture.

18. In the districts situated between Port Douglas and Mackay, including Townsville, the Herbert River, the Johnstone, and the Russell, we directed our attention very largely to the subject of tropical agriculture. It is quite apparent that a very large area of the coast lands in those districts is adapted for the growth of tropical produce of all kinds.

At Cairns and Port Douglas rice is largely grown by the Chinese, and a rice mill at the former port is kept in work dressing the paddy. Before long it is evident that the Queensland growers will be able to fully supply the local market with this article. When that point is reached, however, it is doubtful whether they will be able to export it with profit to markets in which it will have to compete with the grain grown by the cheap labour of Java and China.

Ginger also grows well. Mr. Walker, a select or on the Mulgrave informed us that if he had labour he could produce any quantity of green ginger at a price of 1d. per lb. At Hambleton, Messrs. Swallow have four acres under this crop, the produce of which they will preserve in their factory there.

Coffee of both the Arabian and Liberian varieties grows most luxuriantly. The Arabian variety is, however, considered the best. Some trees which we saw were much larger than we imagine those trees usually are, and everywhere they were loaded with berries. The soil is eminently suited to the growth of coffee, and if its production can only be rendered profitable, North Queensland should become a large producer of this commodity.

Tobacco grows well everywhere, from North to South, but though many attempts have been made to establish its cultivation as an industry, they all appear to have failed, principally, we believe, owing to want of experience in both the cultivation of the plant and the manufacture of the leaf.

Cinnamon grows luxuriantly, and although we did not see the nutmeg of commerce growing, yet we were informed that the wild nutmeg, which grows in the scrubs north of Townsville, is "a very good substitute for it," and therefore we may presume that the cultivated variety would grow well if planted.

On Mr. Seymour's selection, at Mourilyan Harbour, a plantation of india-rubber trees (*Ceara*) is doing well. The trees are yet too young to yield, but a few pounds of rubber were obtained last year, and sent to the Melbourne Exhibition.

At Mr. Montgomery's garden, at Port Douglas, we saw the vanilla bean growing; and we believe not only that those fibre plants, such as *Agave Americana*,
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rhea grass, and others, which now supply the fibres of commerce, will grow well there, but also that there are native fibre plants, such as the wild banana, which might be profitably utilised if the manufacture of fibres was once established in these districts.

All tropical fruits are grown in profusion; every homestead has its small clump of cocoanut palms, which commence to bear here several years earlier, we believe, than in their native country, and at Double Island we saw 5,700 trees in one plantation doing well; mangoes, oranges, lemons, limes, citrons are seen everywhere, growing almost uncared for; custard, apples of different varieties, jack-fruit, tamarinds, and tapioca are also common. We saw a few plants of the mangosteen, which appeared to be thriving, but were not yet old enough to bear; and we heard that the cocoa (*Cacao theobroma*) was growing in the Port Douglas district but did not see it. This tree is tender when young and the first plants sent to the district were lost through neglect or destroyed by vermin. Pineapples, of course, are abundant, but the speciality of these districts at the present time is the banana. An immense quantity of this fruit is grown and a great deal exported in spite of difficulties and drawbacks, which we shall presently discuss. The suitability of the climate for the growth of this fruit is shown by the great size of the bunches, which are far larger than the Fiji bunches. On the Johnstone and at Cairns and Port Douglas this fruit is sold by the bunch at a price of 1s. per bunch, delivered at the wharf, and the dealers refuse to count as a bunch any stalk on which there are less than twelve dozen bananas. We are assured that it is not uncommon to get eighteen or sometimes twenty dozen on a bunch.

In spite of this fertility, however, the drawbacks to the exportation of this fruit are so serious that the growers can make but little of them. 2

19. In these districts, extending from the Herbert River to the north of Port Douglas, this colony possesses a vast estate capable of supplying all Australia with tropical fruits and products, and of enormously increasing the national wealth. In order that the cultivation of some products such as coffee and sugar may be rendered profitable it will be necessary as we have already said that the cultivator shall be enabled to employ a labour cheaper than that of Europeans, and more suitable for field work in a tropical climate. Fruit-growing, however, may be carried on by Europeans, and this industry under favourable circumstances is capable of very great expansion, and should be extremely profitable. At present, however, most of the selectors are in very poor circumstances and cultivation in those districts is almost entirely carried on by Chinese, whilst settlement upon the land is decreasing, and the districts generally retrograding instead of advancing. The principal difficulties with which settlers have now to contend are—1st the difficulty of getting their produce to the port of shipment; and 2nd, the difficulty of getting it thence to its market in marketable condition.

From Cardwell to the north of Port Douglas the coast range attains a height greater than elsewhere in Queensland, rising in some places to over 5,000 feet. Back from the banks of the navigable rivers the country is intersected by lofty and steep spurs running down from this range, and by deep creeks which are generally running and in the rainy season are often for weeks at a time impassable torrents. Until roads and bridges are provided, therefore, settlers back from the rivers, rich as the soil is, can make nothing of their produce, not being able to get it to port. At Port Douglas three village settlements have been surveyed in these back lands and not a single lot selected—which is not to be wondered, at since they are only accessible to pack horses. But these back lands are the only ones at present available for selection as all the frontages to the navigable streams have been secured by selectors (frequently absentees from the colony) who, having taken up the lands as conditional purchasers and performed the conditions by bailiffs, have obtained their deeds and, withdrawn the bailiffs and allowed the lands to revert to their original condition of impenetrable scrub. Wherever the large selectors have settled on their lands they have greatly assisted in the settlement of the country. At Cairns the two large plantations formed in that district represent an invested capital of £310,000, a great part of which was, of course, expended in the district, and, together with the annual working expenditure of over £45,000, must have greatly assisted to support the town of Cairns before it had obtained the trade of the inland districts lying west of the

the range. At the Johnstone River four plantations represent a capital of about £450,000, and the whole of the settlement on that river is due to the expenditure of this money and of the large annual working expenditure of the same plantations, and if they had not existed there would probably not be a single white man on that river. On the Herbert River the capital of the plantations was about £650,000, and the agricultural settlement on that river is entirely due to the existence of those plantations, for most of the farmers first made money by working on them and, since settling on land of their own, have made a living by growing produce for the supply of the plantations, and they now freely state that if the plantations close they will have to abandon cultivation and let their land go back to pasture for cattle, since the expense and difficulty of getting their produce to Townsville would prevent them from finding another market. Here we may remark that whilst in Townsville we noticed an advertisement in the local papers offering for sale 3,000 bags of American maize, and we believe that if we had been able to ascertain the charges made for carriage of that maize we perhaps should have found that it was brought from the interior of the United States to Townsville at a less cost than the Herbert River farmers would have to pay for sending theirs to the same market only 70 miles from where it was grown. But whilst large capitalists who occupy and utilise their lands benefit the colony and the community, those who secure the land and leave it unoccupied are the greatest obstruction that exists to settlement. On the Daintree River the whole of the land along the navigable water (a distance of 23 miles) is selected and made freehold, and in all that distance only five white men are now to be found residing on the land all of them being homestead selectors. On the Mulgrave and the Russell Rivers the same state of things prevails to almost the same extent. And the existence of these large areas of unoccupied scrub by dividing and scattering the few homestead selectors, exposes them to the attacks of the blacks, and in some cases in the Port Douglas district some homestead selectors have had to abandon their land, finding it too great a risk to remain. The few selectors who are attempting to cultivate the lands back from the navigable waters are naturally crying out for the construction of roads and bridges, and as it is clear that the divisional boards in these districts have not the means to provide them, the Government might, under these circumstances, be asked to make some special grant for their assistance.

Shipment of
fruit.

21. But when the fruit has been with trouble and expense brought to the port of shipment, the exporter has a still more serious difficulty to contend with in getting it to market. The grower secures on an average 1s. per bunch for bananas, the freight to Melbourne is 1s. a bunch payable in advance, and the Customs duty on them in Melbourne is 4d. a bunch, or 33 per cent. of the price received by the grower. But this might be borne if he could get his fruit safely and properly carried. Unfortunately for the settlers, only one line of steamers is at present trading to the Northern ports, that of the A.U.S.N. Co., which therefore, has a monopoly of the trade, and this company has adopted a form for their hills of lading which practically exonerates them from all responsibility whatever for the cargo shipped. Shippers have no choice but to accept the terms offered by the company or not to ship. We ourselves saw how these bananas are shipped and carried. At Cairns they were brought alongside of the steamer for the South in a lighter. The main hatch being open, and the steam winch ready, a rope, having at its end some twelve or fifteen small lines of about a yard in length and with a running noose at the end of each was passed through the block on the derrick, and the end of it then lowered into the hold of the lighter, each noose on the end of the small lines was passed over the stalk of a bunch of bananas, and the word given to hoist away; steam was turned on at the winch and twelve or fifteen bunches of bananas were violently jerked out of the mass in the lighter's hold, banged against the edge of the lighter's hatchway, then against the steamer's side, and then run up a little higher and down with a run into the hold. After being shipped in this manner they are stowed sometimes below and sometimes on deck in piles of from 6 to 7 or 8 feet high, and as some of these bunches will weigh 150 lbs., the weight on the lower layers must be too much for any soft fruit to bear. It is no wonder, with this treatment, that more than half of the bananas shipped have to be carted to the manure depôt when they arrive at Melbourne. It should be mentioned too

too that whilst the distance from Fiji to Sydney is 1,872 miles, the Fiji bananas are landed there in seven days, whilst the transit from Port Douglas to Melbourne, a distance of 2,017 miles, takes fourteen days. Owing to this lengthy transit our growers have to cut their bananas when they are too green, and thus the Fiji banana gets the name of being the better fruit. Other fruits—oranges, lemons, mangoes, &c., are shipped in cases, but the shippers of these are no better off, the fruit being regularly stolen to such an extent that consignees frequently refuse to continue to deal with the growers. The extent to which this plunder of cargo is carried is most disgraceful. (Qs 146, 148, 261, 712, 717, 810, 820, 852, 1279, 1280, 1288, 1330, 1773, 1776, &c.). And although we had evidence that claims had frequently been sent in to the company for losses sustained thereby, we were unable to hear of any instance in which they had been allowed in the North. We may here state that this plunder of shipments of fruit is complained of by every shipper of fruit from Port Douglas to Maryborough, and it appears to prevail on the steamers of both the companies which trade on our coast.

The manager of the A.U.S.N. Co., whom we had before us in Brisbane, informed us that he was about to try a better plan of shipping bananas than the one we have described, and also that two vessels of the company's fleet had been specially fitted up to carry bananas, though after being so fitted they were laid up whilst other vessels were employed in the trade. He admitted that there was a regular system of pilfering fruit on board the company's vessels, which he considered the company could not prevent. We are of a different opinion, believing that if the loss occasioned by these thefts had to be borne by the company, it would quickly discover a way to stop them. It was stated to us in evidence that the freight paid on fruit shipped South from Cairns amounted to £150 per week, and we are satisfied that the existing trade could be quickly quadrupled if shippers could have any reasonable hope that their fruit would not be stolen, and would arrive at its destination in good condition.

For the purpose of encouraging the development of tropical agriculture and fruit-growing in the Northern districts, we beg to offer the following recommendations:—

Recommendations.

1. That the Legislature should be invited to pass an Act of Parliament defining the responsibility of public carriers, and declaring null and void all conditions inserted in bills of lading or other contracts whereby they may seek to evade the responsibility which in the opinion of the Legislature should properly attach to their business.
2. That if possible arrangements should be made for the conveyance of the Northern mails by special fast steamers, which should carry only mails, passengers, and fruit, such steamers to be properly fitted for the carriage of fruit, and to run from Cooktown to Melbourne in eight days.
3. That an experienced tropical agriculturist be appointed to supervise the experimental farms at Cairns and elsewhere in the North, with instructions to pay visits periodically to the principal cultivators of tropical produce in the Northern district, for the purpose of observing their progress, and conferring with and advising them, and to report to the Government from time to time on the progress of the industry, and bring its requirements under notice.
4. That negotiations be opened with the Governments of Victoria and the other Australian colonies, with the object of obtaining the admission into those colonies of Queensland fruit duty free, as we admit their fruits.

H. E. KING.

A. S. COWLEY.

1889.

QUEENSLAND.

SUGAR INDUSTRY COMMISSION.

REPORT.

To His Excellency SIR ARTHUR HUNTER PALMER, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, President of the Legislative Council, and Administrator of the Government of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

As Chairman of the Commission appointed by letters patent dated the 29th day of November, 1888, "to inquire into and report upon the general condition of the sugar industry in Queensland and the causes which have led to its present languishing condition, and the best means to be adopted for reviving and maintaining its prosperity, and, generally, upon the prospects of tropical agriculture in Queensland," I have the honour to lay before your Excellency the following Report:—

1. Immediately upon receiving the letters patent the Commissioners met in the Parliamentary Buildings, Brisbane, and, taking into consideration the great difficulties of travelling in the North during the wet season, and the importance of making a thorough examination of witnesses and inspection of the plantations in the Northern districts, resolved to proceed to Port Douglas and to work from there down to the more Southern portions of the colony. Accordingly we proceeded direct to the Northern districts, and have examined minutely the state of the sugar industry and the condition of tropical agriculture at Port Douglas, Cairns, the Herbert River, the Johnstone River, Townsville, the Delta of the Burdekin, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Maryborough, Rosewood, Logan, Pimpama, and the Cooinera. There were examined altogether 154 witnesses, whose names appear in the index, and who may be classified as follows:—Government officials, 17; planters and managers, 45; farmers and selectors, 53; merchants and storekeepers, 19; manufacturers, 5; sundry professions and working men, 15.

2. In the earlier part of the inquiry it was discovered that, owing to the great distance at which many of the planters resided from where the Commissioners had agreed upon to take the testimony of witnesses, it was impossible for them to attend and give evidence; many of them also were absent from the districts, and it was deemed desirable in both cases that the opinion of these planters on the sugar question should be ascertained. There were accordingly drafted a series of questions, which will be found in an appendix. These questions, together with a circular letter, were sent to 300 planters. Replies were received from ninety-six of them; and in order that their views should be put in a concrete form, the whole of the answers to the various questions have been summarised in narrative form, and is appended to the evidence. Advertisements were also inserted in several newspapers inviting evidence from all who were disposed to assist the inquiry.

3. Travelling over such a large area of country, and examining such a large number of witnesses, and visiting and inspecting almost every sugar plantation in Queensland, necessarily gave me a very accurate idea of the value of the sugar industry to the colony. The total area of land under cultivation in the colony on the 31st December, 1887, was 205,737 acres, of which 51,815 acres were under sugar cultivation

1890
 whites interested in sugar

cultivation (*vide* statistics of Registrar-General), thus showing that the sugar industry represents one-fourth of the entire area cultivated in the colony. From the evidence of various witnesses examined, and from evidence obtained in another way, I estimate that the capital invested in the sugar industry of the colony ranges from £1,000,000 to £5,000,000 sterling; the machinery alone represents a value of £1,000,000; the annual expenditure is scarcely less than £700,000 sterling, and the value of the sugar exported is, in good seasons, about £800,000. For the season ended the 31st of March of this year, the quantity of sugar exported was 17,000 tons, which, at £20 per ton, represents a value of £340,000. The number of white Europeans who are permanently employed in the sugar industry cannot be less than from 2,000 to 3,000; the total number who are more or less directly interested in the industry cannot be less than 10,000 persons; and the number of Polynesians who are engaged in the industry is from 6,000 to 7,000. The wages of the kanakas amount to about £50,000 per annum, whilst that of Europeans would amount to £100,000. In the districts north of Townsville the farmers' produce is almost entirely consumed by the plantations, the number of horses that are being worked being enormous, averaging in many instances over a hundred on a single plantation. The shipping trade of the colony is also seriously interested in the sugar industry, and its importance in this connection may be judged from the fact that the A. U. S. N. Company's returns for 1888 show a diminution in receipts on the freight of sugar alone of £22,000 (*vide* Mr. Munro's evidence, question 8480), arising from the shortness of the crop of that year, which was occasioned by the drought. Thus it will be apparent that the prosperity of a very large portion of the colony and of a very large number of its inhabitants depends almost exclusively upon the prosperity or otherwise of the sugar industry.

Present condition of the sugar industry.

At Cairns.

At the Johnstone River.

On the Herbert River.

4. Is the sugar industry now depressed, and is its condition such as to justify inquiry and remedial measures? The results of a personal inspection of the various districts of the colony have gone a long way to answer this question. At Port Douglas there is only one plantation, and at the time of my visit that was closed, and was in liquidation. The capital invested in it was represented to be about £16,000, and scarcely any of those who had had anything whatever to do with the plantation were able to make it a profitable undertaking. At Cairns the principal sugar plantations are Hambleton and the Pyramid. Upon Hambleton the sum of £180,000 had been expended, but it had returned no interest, and at the Pyramid £130,000 had been invested, and no interest whatever had been received from it. A private individual and a company who subsequently purchased the plantation have been ruined, and now it is in the hands of the mortgagees, who are willing to dispose of it at one-fourth of its value, or perhaps even less. At the Johnstone River a similar state of affairs was found to exist. The only plantation there which showed anything like indications of paying its way was that of Goondi, the property of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. As this company has enormous capital at its back it is enabled to effect improvements in machinery and otherwise for the production of sugar from cane, and to carry on all its undertakings in the most approved manner. On the Herbert River I found both planters and farmers who grew cane in a state of great depression. No rain had fallen there for several months when I visited the locality, and the outlook for the future was anything but promising. I found all the plantations, with one or two exceptions, heavily encumbered, many of them barely paying their way, while in others the mortgagees had foreclosed and sales had been effected at not more than one-sixth the original cost of the properties. Thus the Hamleigh plantation—the property of the Hamleigh Sugar Company, a Melbourne proprietary—had cost £120,000 when all further pecuniary advances were refused. The plantation comprised 5,400 acres of land, a mill which cost £30,000, agricultural implements of all descriptions, including two steam ploughs, and a substantial and well-built homestead of more or less value. This property was placed in the market at Melbourne for *bona fide* unreserved sale, and was purchased by Whippingham Brothers for £13,000. The late firm of Fanning, Nankivell, and Company was estimated to have lost fully £200,000 by their sugar investments on the Herbert River, their Gairloch plantation alone, upon which £120,000 had been expended, realising only £16,000. The Macnade plantation, upon which £130,000 had been expended, was taken over by the mortgagee for the amount of his mortgage, £35,000. Other cases could be quoted, but the foregoing

going will suffice to show the condition of the Herbert River plantations. The small cane growers, who rely almost entirely upon cane growing for a livelihood, gave evidence as to their condition; their crops of cane had decreased from 40 tons the acre to 16, 13, and 12 tons; they had found extreme difficulty in making a living, and many of them had been obliged to obtain employment from the divisional boards as contractors, in order to acquire the necessary funds to keep their farms in working order. On the Delta of the Burdekin the plantations were in an equally deplorable condition. With the exception of one or two, all were heavily encumbered, and the losses arising from the low price of sugar and the continued drought had brought ruin more or less upon all of them; in some instances mortgagees had foreclosed, and the planters had become simply managers and field overseers on their own plantations. At Mackay, which may be regarded as one of the chief centres of the sugar industry of Queensland, and where there are 17,500 acres of land under sugar cultivation, I found the condition of affairs practically the same as in most of the other sugar growing districts. The sudden fall in the price of sugar and the continued drought, the heavy interest to be paid on borrowed money, and the large sums invested in machinery, had all assisted to the accumulation of serious liabilities, which pressed heavily upon the planters and rendered the position of many of them almost intolerable. Only in one instance—that of Mr. McCredie, of Palmyra, was there a return of interest on the capital invested, and this case illustrates the force of what will be said further on in relation to large unproductive areas. Mr. McCredie's plantation comprises only 620 acres, of which 470 acres were under cane. For six years, prior to 1888, the plantation yielded 6½ per cent. interest after paying working expenses. The year 1888, owing to the continued low price of sugar and the effects of the drought, showed a loss of £1,500. The amount of capital invested was £20,000, and the mill cost £4,500 in Glasgow, and with buildings and cost of erection, only £9,000. The small farmers at Mackay, equally with their fellow labourers on the Herbert River, were in a very depressed condition, inasmuch as the yield of cane on many of the small farms of the district had been much lower than on the Herbert, being in some cases as low as 2 tons to the acre. I am able to speak from personal observation of some of these cases, and there may be some justification for the statement of one of the witnesses that some of the selectors were in such a condition that they were obliged to go into the bush and shoot a stray kangaroo to find animal food for their families. This evidence was given by a perfectly disinterested witness, whose sympathies were entirely with the small farmers and who had every opportunity of knowing and learning their condition. The town of Mackay itself was most seriously depressed in its trade and general business, and, from the evidence of the commercial men there, it was quite evident that the whole of the townspeople seriously felt the depression which rests upon the sugar industry of that district. In 1887 the exports from the port of Mackay were £302,424, and in 1888 they had fallen to £137,529; the imports in 1887 were £125,730, and in 1888 they fell to £91,128. These statistics were furnished by the sub-collector of Customs at Mackay, and they very clearly demonstrate the serious effects which a prolonged drought of two years have had upon the trade of the port. At Rockhampton there is only one plantation; it was in liquidation, and was offered for sale on the day following the arrival of the Commissioners, and sold, subject to the approval of the guarantors, for £10,500. About £40,000 had been expended upon it; only £24,000 of the capital had been subscribed, and there was an overdraft, for which certain guarantors were responsible, of £16,000. The causes assigned for the failure of this plantation were the low price of sugar, the drought of 1888, and early difficulties in connection with labour. At Bundaberg I found the condition of affairs somewhat different. This district has been comparatively prosperous, and the rising and progressive town of Bundaberg owes its progress and its large accession of population almost entirely to the sugar industry. It has not suffered like many of the other districts of the colony. The soil is exceptionally rich, more particularly in the Woongarra scrub, and the yield of cane is proportionately large; the erection of a sugar refinery by the Messrs. Cran at Millaquin has also been an important factor in aiding and assisting the sugar industry, and in the planters and growers of cane obtaining remunerative prices for their products. The Millaquin refinery represents a capital of £150,000, and an annual expenditure of from £40,000 to £60,000, and from the excellent system

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On the Burdekin Delta.

At Mackay.

note

At Rockhampton.

At Bundaberg.

2 system it possesses for bringing the juice from the sugar mills to the refinery, has contributed largely to the success of the cane growers in the past, and will no doubt do so in the future. There is not so much interest to pay on borrowed money in this locality as in some of the other sugar growing districts, nor has so large an amount been invested in machinery on which interest has to be paid, nor are the areas of land in the possession of the planters more than they can manage or turn to useful and practical account. The result of all these circumstances is that Bundaberg is, comparatively speaking and when compared with the more Northern districts, a prosperous sugar growing district; its success largely depends upon the sugar industry, and this fact is amply borne out by the official statistics of 1888. The total exports from the port of Bundaberg for that year were £362,500, of which £308,422 was for sugar alone, leaving only £54,000 for other productions. At Maryborough the sugar industry was in a very depressed condition, arising partly from the drought, partly from the low price of sugar, and partly no doubt from exhaustion of the soil by continuous cropping and with one particular crop. At one time the export of sugar from Maryborough ranged from 5,000 tons to 6,000 tons; it has now fallen to 1,500 tons, notwithstanding that at Yengarie there is a large refinery in which £100,000 is invested, and which is capable of manufacturing from 3,000 tons to 4,000 tons of refined sugar in the season. In the Logan district I found many of the older plantations abandoned, but many of the smaller ones are still in existence and are growing cane, in some cases profitably, and in others affording the owners only a bare subsistence. The co-operative principle, judging from the experiment which has been made at Eaglesby, appears to have been successful, and the Germans, who have established a co-operative mill there and who have worked it for the past seven years, are perfectly satisfied with what they have done in the past and with their prospects for the future. At the Coomera, at Mr. Grimes's plantation, a similar hopeful condition prevails, and Mr. Grimes is so satisfied with his past efforts and his prospects for the future that he intends to place forty acres more under cane. The foregoing will, I think, show beyond any doubt that the sugar industry on the whole is very much depressed and its existence as an industry seriously imperilled from a variety of causes other than labour.

At Maryborough.

On the Logan River.

At Coomera.

Causes assigned for depression.

5. The causes assigned for the depression, as will be gathered from the evidence, are numerous and varied. They comprise mismanagement, extravagance and inexperience of planters in the early days of the industry, financial embarrassment owing to working on borrowed capital, losses through unfavourable seasons, disease, exhaustion of the soil, fall in the price of sugar, and loss of confidence in the industry, which, it is alleged, is owing to the abolition of black labour in the near future, and which prevents planters obtaining the necessary advances to carry them on.

Fall in price of sugar the primary cause.

6. The great fall in the price of sugar is, in my opinion, the primary cause of the depression. When sugar was realising from £30 to £35 per ton a sort of "boom" set in, and there was a rush of persons to the Northern districts to select land for sugar growing purposes under the belief that rapid fortunes were to be made. Blocks of land were selected on the various Northern rivers ranging in area from 640 acres to 1,250 acres, and other areas were acquired making the total area in many instances 5,000, and as high as 8,000 and 12,000 acres; large orders for machinery were sent to England and mills were erected at a cost in many instances of £40,000, when perhaps a mill of one-fourth the capacity and one-fourth the cost would have been ample for the then area under cultivation. On the earlier plantations everything appears to have been conducted on a scale of extravagance unusual and quite foreign to the commencement of a new industry. The money for carrying out the undertaking had in most cases to be borrowed, or at all events a very large proportion of it, and the result has been that the accumulated interest upon the borrowed capital has now attained a sum it is quite impossible for the plantations to bear, and necessarily must entail certain ruin on many of the owners of them. In some cases 7,000 acres of land are included in a plantation, but not more than 800 acres have been cultivated; and not more than 600 acres are at the present time under cane. The mill machinery for crushing this cane has cost at the least from £30,000 to £40,000, and the buildings and other improvements which have been erected and carried out represent a capital of £100,000; and in many instances

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a much larger sum. The whole of the working expenses of such a plantation, and the interest on the money invested on the unproductive land, and in machinery and buildings, have to be borne by the small area cultivated; and when to this is added the small crop of cane owing to the continued drought of the last two years, the condition of many of the planters can be very well understood. It is here that the charges of alleged mismanagement and extravagant expenditure find a place, whilst the inexperience and lack of knowledge on the part of planters in the early days respecting the cultivation of sugar cane and the manufacture of sugar is painfully evident in the large and expensive establishments which have been erected, and which subsequent events have shown were totally unnecessary, as much smaller machinery and much less capital would have answered all the purposes of the owners of the plantations. It is but just to say that since the fall in the price of sugar there has been a great desire on the part of the planters to improve their machinery by double crushing power, the prevention of waste, and otherwise, so as to obtain as much sugar as possible from the cane, and this result has undoubtedly been attained. But these improvements have added to the original cost of the plants, and still further increased the liabilities and accruing interest on already overburdened plantations.

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7. That there have been serious losses through the drought of the past two years and from disease has also been made apparent, and is clearly revealed in the evidence appended. On the Herbert River the grub has proved very destructive; in some cases small farmers have had as much as twenty-five acres in a season completely destroyed, while in other cases the loss from the same cause is stated to have been 10, 15, and as high as 25 per cent. The losses by drought are, of course, more serious. In good seasons, on many of the plantations north of Townsville, the yield of cane has been from 30 tons to 40 tons the acre. In 1887, owing to the drought, it fell to 20 tons, 18 tons, and 16 tons, and, during 1888, owing to the continuance of the drought it fell in some instances, even in favoured districts, as low as 12 tons to the acre; and at Mackay the yield of some of the small farms only averaged 2 tons of cane to the acre. The losses, therefore, by drought and by the ravages of the insect plague have been, without question, no small factors in assisting to bring about the present depression in the sugar industry. The grub has been very destructive during the last two years in all the scrub lands. According to the experience of planters in the Cairns, Johnstone, and Herbert River Districts, it commences its ravages on lands that have been cleared for the first time, and planted at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth year. Entomologists state that the grub which attacks the cane takes three years from the laying of the egg until the beetle comes to maturity; but the experience of planters goes to show that in the months of September and October the grub enters the dormant or chrysalis state, and in November and December it is hatched as a winged black beetle. The beetle emerges from the soil at the end of December and the early part of January, and takes wing usually to trees, where they often destroy the young wood by ringbarking. Newly slacked lime has been applied as a remedy around the cane, but it has not succeeded in destroying the grub at the period when it is most destructive. Experience goes to show that the grub thrives best in dry soil, and is especially troublesome in seasons of drought, hence the reason why it has been so destructive during the years of 1887 and 1888. At Mourilyan the grub first attacked the young ratoons at the end of the year 1886, three and a-half years after the scrub had been felled and the land planted; and it did so on all the river frontages of that plantation with such vigour that labour was unable to cope with the pest, and a large area of cane was entirely destroyed, and the land for a time abandoned. At the close of the rainy season in 1887, the land was grubbed, stumped, ploughed, harrowed, and replanted, and by December of 1887, 179 acres were under cultivation and planted with cane; in only one ploughed block did the grub reappear, and then only in small patches. From the experience of this plantation it would appear that thorough cultivation is the best cure and remedy for this pest. Attention, however, is directed to an extract from a letter written by Mr. Angus Gibson, of Bingera plantation, in the Bundaberg district, to Mr. A. S. Cowley, in which the writer states that irrigation has been the means of checking the progress of the grub; that it cannot stand an excess of moisture; and that where the cane land is flooded with irrigation

Losses from drought and disease.

The grub pest.

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irrigation waters the grubs rise to the surface and die; and hundreds of birds have been seen hovering round the irrigated cane in search of the grubs floating on the surface of the water.

Causes of want
of confidence on
the part of
monetary
institutions in
the sugar
industry.

Beetroot
cultivation in
United States.

Bounties on
sugar in
Europe.

8. It is alleged by many of the witnesses that the want of confidence now manifested by banks and monetary institutions in the sugar industry has arisen from the action of the Legislature in passing a statute by which the importation of Polynesian labour is absolutely prohibited after the 31st of December, 1890; but the facts adduced will scarcely bear out the contention. I think that the fall in the price of sugar, and the enormous increase in the quantity of sugar manufactured from beetroot, and the heavy losses occasioned by the drought, are the chief reasons why, at the present time, there is a want of confidence felt in the sugar industry. At the present time the United States of America, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, and Holland, are all engaged in the production of sugar, and are adopting every means, scientific and otherwise, to encourage its culture and to assist its progress. Large plantations in the Sandwich Islands are owned almost exclusively by wealthy Americans, and the output of sugar from those islands is very large indeed. The American Government have for some time past, through the medium of their agricultural department, been making a number of experiments with the view of testing the adaptability of sorghum as a sugar growing plant, and the latest reports which were laid before the Sugar Convention held in London in August of last year went to show that it was fully anticipated that the State of Kansas alone would, in the course of time, produce a yield of 500,000 tons of sugar from sorghum. Mr. Spreckles, who is one of the largest owners of plantations in the Sandwich Islands, has now erected a large beetroot sugar manufactory at San Francisco, and is not only cultivating a large area of beetroot himself, but has also offered special inducements to the farmers to grow beetroot for him, and a very large area in that State has been placed under cultivation with the sugar beetroot. In fact, every effort is being put forth by the United States Government and people to grow as much sugar as possible, in order to keep down importations, and hence the reason why the United States Government declined to be officially represented at the recent international conference in London on the sugar question. It appears to me that the effect of the bounty system upon sugar production is not sufficiently estimated by the general public, or by those engaged in the sugar industry. Undoubtedly it is the means of giving an immense amount of employment, both in the field and the factory, to the large industrial populations of France, Germany, Austria, and other Continental nations; and these countries are prepared to make unusual sacrifices in order to keep up the sugar industry, and to encourage as much as possible large exports of sugar. What the Continental nations are now doing in order to foster the industry may be gathered from the following extract from a speech of Baron de Worms, one of the representatives of Great Britain at the Sugar Convention, and who was elected its president, delivered at Greenock on the 1st of last November. The right honourable gentleman said:

"The following figures will show the sacrifices foreign countries make in order to maintain the bounty system. Bounties cost France £3,350,000, Germany £3,233,484, Austria £1,036,667, Belgium £813,000, Holland £309,655. In Germany this amounts to £5 per ton on the quantity exported, in France to £9 per ton on the quantity manufactured, in Austria to £3 per ton on the quantity exported, in Belgium to £8 per ton on the quantity exported, and in Holland to £3 per ton on the quantity exported. Why do foreign governments make these tremendous sacrifices? The answer is very simple. Their object has been, and is, to develop by artificial means their own sugar industry, and the artificial means they adopt are the State subsidies. Against whom is this artificial competition aimed? Against the cane sugar producer of the British colonies, and the refiner of the British towns. It is impossible to suggest any other reason for the existence of sugar bounties in foreign countries, inasmuch as the great sugar market of the world is England, and that the only means by which foreign countries could hope to compete with or to destroy the British sugar industry was by giving an advance to their producers and refiners—a profit far away greater than the legitimate profit which could be earned in the ordinary course of trade."

The foregoing indicates the enormous sacrifices which Continental nations are making in order to foster and encourage the production of sugar from beetroot, and it is against this article that the sugar growers of Queensland have largely to contend. It is, in my opinion, the knowledge of this competition added to the extremely low price of sugar which it has occasioned (and Mr. Knox, the general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, in his evidence, states that the low price is likely to be permanent), and the smallness of the crops caused by the two years' drought,

drought, and the already embarrassed condition of the planters, which have brought about the want of confidence that it is now alleged is manifested by monetary institutions in the sugar industry.

note

9. The remedies suggested by the various witnesses for the amelioration of the condition of the sugar industry, briefly summarised, are as follows:—

- (a) The repeal of the 11th section of "*The Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1885*," and its extension for a further period of five years;
- (b) A reciprocity treaty to be entered into with the Australasian colonies, for the admission of Queensland grown sugar duty free upon certain conditions to be arranged between the contracting parties;
- (c) The adoption of a comprehensive irrigation scheme; and
- (d) That the Government should take the introduction of Polynesians into their own hands, and establish depôts at the various islands to be managed by Government agents, and that on the arrival of islanders in Queensland they should be conveyed to the immigration barracks, and there be open to engagement in the same way as ordinary white immigrants, the planters to be responsible for the whole cost of the scheme.

Remedies suggested.
checked
Central
small
see page I

10. In considering the first of these suggested remedies, a very grave question of public policy arises. In the general election of 1883, the question of coloured labour was distinctly before the constituencies, and they were invited through the ballot-box to pronounce an authoritative opinion as to whether coloured labour was desirable or otherwise for any of the industries of Queensland. The answer was an emphatic "No," and a large majority of members were returned to Parliament pledged to oppose the introduction of coloured labour and to put a stop to its further introduction as early as possible. The will of the people thus declared through the ballot-box, was given practical effect to by the Parliament of the day, who repealed "*The Coolie Immigration Act of 1862*," and passed "*The Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1885*," the 11th section of which prohibits the further introduction of South Sea islanders on and after the 31st of December, 1890. At the general election of May, 1888, the question was again before the constituencies, and in most of the large centres of population, as well as in many of the more sparsely populated districts, candidates were returned opposed to coloured labour. Those who are engaged in the sugar industry, therefore, ask the Parliament of the country to reverse its decision arrived at after mature deliberation on the part of the great body of the electors, who authorised their members to give effect to their wishes. Assuming that heavy losses, arising from the causes already defined, are one of the reasons why the country is asked to reverse its decision on the coloured labour question, may it not with equal propriety be asked that some consideration should be shown to the graziers and agriculturists of the colony who have also sustained serious and grievous losses through the late disastrous drought; and may not the growers of wheat and maize in the various districts of the colony who suffer from a failure of their crops, and the large number of farmers in the Logan district, who have not only suffered from the drought, but also from one of the most disastrous floods that ever afflicted the country, with equal reason apply for legislation in their behalf? I respectfully submit that in considering the proposed remedy suggested for the relief of one particular class of the community, we are bound in all fairness and justice to consider how far that relief is justifiable as affecting other portions of the colony. The verdict of the electors was unquestionably adverse to the revival of the coloured labour question, it was considered by public men in all its aspects—moral, social, and political—and it was deemed advisable in the best interests of the country that a time should come when coloured labour should cease, and when all the industries of the country should be conducted entirely by white labour. The question now to be determined is, has anything special arisen which would justify a departure from the previous action of the Legislature, who simply gave effect to the deliberate voice of the people?

Proposed extension for further period of five years of the 11th section of "The Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1885."

note

(A.) Moreover,

Federation of
the Colonies

(A.) Moreover, if Australia is to be a great federated dominion on the basis of the Dominion of Canada, with a dominion parliament and a dominion executive, and the federated colonies are still to retain their present governments and legislatures, then without question, the further admission into any colony of Asiatic or coloured races is definitely set led, because federation of the colonies means the exclusion of all Asiatic and coloured races from Australia, except to a very inappreciable extent. The public men of the larger colonies of Victoria and New South Wales have already intimated in their several addresses at the recent general elections in those colonies their belief in federation, and their intention at the same time to keep Australia free from all Asiatic or coloured races. Hence it is clear that if Queensland is to join in a federated Australia—and the aspirations of all her public men are in that direction—the request of the planters for the extension of the terms of the 11th section of “*The Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1885*” is practically disposed of.

Difficulties of
agriculturists
in the Northern
coast districts

On the other hand, the question arises, “Is Queensland in a position to do without the sugar industry, or to confine the cultivation of sugar to white labour exclusively?” And in answering that question we are bound to look at all the surrounding circumstances of the case. The climate north of Townsville is essentially tropical, the scrubs are an impenetrable jungle, and from the evidence placed before the Commission it is evident that they will cost an enormous amount of money to clear them and render the land available for agricultural purposes. Further, immediately the scrub is cleared, malaria arises, seriously detrimental to the health of Europeans and destructive to human life, as has already been proved in the construction of a line of railway from Mourilyan plantation to Mourilyan Harbour. It is the opinion of all who have had experience of the districts north of Townsville that the dense scrubs of the Johnstone, and the Barron, and the Tully, and the Russell cannot be cleared by European labour. At present agricultural labour by Europeans on their own freehold land in the districts now under consideration is evaded as much as possible. Thus in the district of Cairns the whole of the agriculture outside sugar growing is carried on by Chinese. There are from 1,200 to 1,500 Chinamen in the Cairns district, and the evidence of witnesses, including that of the Crown Lands Ranger, affirms the fact that were it not for the Chinamen there would not be an acre of land under cultivation in Cairns outside the sugar plantations. A central rice mill has been erected a short distance from Cairns, and last year there was manufactured in it 700 tons of rice. The whole of the “paddy” was grown by Chinamen, so that the mill may be said to be practically kept in existence by Chinese labour. Homestead selections have been taken up in the Cairns and other districts, both under “*The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876*,” and “*The Crown Lands Act of 1884*.” The selectors reside on their selections, but for the first five years they lease their land to Chinamen on a clearing lease, at 1s. per acre per annum. Thus, while the Chinaman is absolutely fulfilling the conditions of selection, the selector is receiving a profit of 9d. per acre from the land. At the end of the first five years another agreement is made between the selector and the Chinaman, and the cultivated land is then let at the rate of £1 an acre per annum. In one case a homestead selector holding 160 acres had 130 acres cleared in this manner, and he has now for himself eight acres, with a garden planted by Chinese, while 122 acres are let to Chinese at £1 per acre per annum, and this is apparently the general mode in which agriculture is carried on in a large portion of the Northern coast districts. At Herberton, where the climate is much colder, and where productions of a more temperate zone can be grown, European labour finds a fitting outlet, but without question in the coast districts north of Townsville there is, in a great many instances, a disposition on the part of Europeans to have nothing whatever to do with agriculture, until the land has been cleared and made ready for cultivation. Consequently, if the question “is Queensland able to do without the sugar industry, except on the basis of a white population?” is answered in the affirmative, then undoubtedly a very large portion of the coast districts of the North will not be cultivated, at all events for a long time to come, and from £4,000,000 to £5,000,000 of capital which has been vested in the sugar industry will be wiped out of existence, and the whole of the population now dependent upon the sugar industry for a livelihood will, for a time, and until new industries arise, be thrown out of employment. Can Queensland at the present time afford to do this?

Clearing leases
given to
Chinese by
selectors

11. The second remedy suggested for the revival of the sugar industry is that of a reciprocity treaty with the Australasian colonies, which, it is affirmed by the planters, would be the means of adding value to their sugar of from £2 to £3 per ton at least. This question is also one of public policy, and it is surrounded with a great many difficulties. The rights of thousands of persons engaged in agriculture, outside the sugar industry, have fairly to be considered when dealing with reciprocity treaties. However advantageous a reciprocity treaty may be to the planters, it would only be of special benefit to themselves, so far as Queensland products are concerned, but it might prove ruinous to all the other agriculturists in all parts of the colony. The basis of the suggested reciprocity treaty was not stated; there was merely an expression of opinion given that a reciprocity treaty would open a better market for Queensland manufactured sugar, and place it in a position more able to stand the competition of its rivals from other countries. Assuming that the suggested reciprocity treaty would mean the admission of agricultural produce grown in the other colonies free into all the ports of this colony, in consideration of the admission of sugar into the ports of the other colonies free of duty, then it must be apparent that it would mean the striking of a most severe blow at the other agricultural interests of the colony, without any corresponding advantage whatever being conferred upon them. In fact, it would mean class legislation of a most objectionable form, and it would be totally inconsistent with the fiscal policy of the colony as defined in "*The Customs Duties Act of 1888.*"

Proposed reciprocity treaty with Australasian colonies.

note

12. The third suggested remedy of irrigation works, wherever practicable, I entirely concur with. At the Burdekin Delta the Messrs. Drysdale Brothers are carrying out irrigation on a very extended scale. The Messrs. Young, of Kalamai, and Mr. Mackenzie, of Seaforth, have also established irrigation works, and their value was made apparent to the Commission. I also had the opportunity of seeing irrigation on a small scale carried out by a selector named Payard, who, with a plant that cost £250, was able to irrigate twenty-three acres of cultivated land and raise good crops, and to flood a large portion of thirty acres of grass land, and obtain grass feed for his dairy cattle, while the neighbouring selectors around him, who had no means for irrigation, had no crops, and lost nearly all their cattle. I believe that irrigation applied to the sugar plantations, wherever practicable, will go a long way indeed to assist in relieving the industry of its present depression, inasmuch as where a plentiful supply of water can be obtained, a crop of cane can be assured even in the driest of seasons. This was made most clearly demonstrable at the Pioneer plantation of the Messrs. Drysdale on the Burdekin Delta. It will be observed from the evidence that the general consensus of opinion is strongly in favour of irrigation in sugar-growing districts, and that there was a disposition on the part of both planters and small farmers to pay any reasonable rate which may be imposed to cover the interest on the outlay necessary for an irrigation scheme and the cost of its maintenance. Many of the farmers expressed themselves willing to pay as much as £2 per acre per annum for the supply of water for irrigation purposes.

Irrigation experiments on the Burdekin Delta at Kalamai, and Seaforth.

note

13. The fourth and final suggested remedy is that the Government should take the introduction of Polynesians into their own hands, establish depôts at the various South Sea islands, to be managed by Government agents, and that on the arrival of the islanders in Queensland they should be conveyed to immigration barracks, and there be open to engagement in the same way as ordinary white immigrants; the planters to be responsible for the whole cost of the scheme. The remarks made with respect to the first suggested remedy apply with greater force to the foregoing. The question of coloured labour, so far as legislation is concerned, may be said to be practically closed. The people have already pronounced an authoritative opinion upon it, and the principal public men of the colony have, whenever opportunity has occurred, more or less emphatically declared that they are not disposed to re-open the subject. The acceptance of the suggestion in its entirety would mean the complete re-opening of the coloured labour question, because all legislation affecting it now would have to be repealed, a new system would have to be introduced, a new set of regulations would have to be framed, and radical changes effected, without any apparent counterbalancing advantages. The fact that the cost of the projected scheme would be borne by those who are engaged in the sugar industry does not outweigh the higher considerations which

Proposed introduction of Polynesian labourers by Government.

are

are involved as affecting the community generally. The acceptance of the suggestion would mean that Queensland was prepared to recognise the introduction of coloured labour as an absolute necessity; and the fact that the Government had accepted the entire responsibility of introducing coloured labour would not, in my opinion, have an influence for good in the future. At present the system is surrounded with certain safeguards, and yet the evidence which has been adduced shows that in some instances the introduction of coloured labour has proved objectionable. At Rockhampton there are, according to the evidence of the Polynesian Inspector, 200 kanakas in the district; he was only able to account for 82 of them. It is known that there is quite a colony of South Sea islanders in North Rockhampton, some of whom have married white women, have drays and carts of their own, and are competing with Europeans in the cutting and sale of firewood, and many of them are also employed in other ways. At Bundaherg there at least 300 South Sea islanders walking about, engaging for short periods, and are thus in open competition with Europeans. It is clear that, even with the safeguards already established by the Legislature, the South Sea Islanders are coming into active competition with white men, and are doing work which by no straining of words can be called tropical agriculture. From the tone of public opinion, and from the facts detailed in evidence, the fourth remedy suggested as a means for reviving the sugar industry is not one that I can recommend for the acceptance of Your Excellency's Advisers.

14. In inquiring into the sugar industry it was impossible to avoid inquiry into the success or otherwise of the central mill system. In the session of 1885 Parliament voted £50,000 for the erection of central sugar mills, and in December of that year, in order to determine upon the localities where these mills should be erected the then Government appointed Mr. W. O. Hodgkinson, M.L.A., to visit the various sugar districts of the colony and report as to the most desirable places for the establishment of such mills. Mr. Hodgkinson furnished a report in accordance with the terms of the letter which the Chief Secretary had addressed to him, and that report was presented to both Houses of Parliament in the session of 1886. Acting on that report, two central mills were established—one at North Eton, known as the North Eton Central Sugar Company, Limited; and the other at the Racecourse, known as the Racecourse Central Sugar Company, Limited. Agreements between the registered shareholders and the Government were duly drawn and executed, and a bill of incumbrance was prepared by which their respective properties were virtually mortgaged to the Government as security for advances to be made for the erection of the mills.

(A.) In the case of the North Eton Company the number of shares applied for represented £20,375; the amount actually expended on the mill, when the balance which was pending at the time of our visit to Mackay is paid, will be £25,000. The mill and buildings have cost the amount which has been advanced, and the mill is capable of turning out 1,500 tons of sugar during the crushing season. Owing, however, to the severe drought of the past two years the North Eton Central Mill has not had anything like a fair trial. Last season only 100 tons of sugar was manufactured there, and the evidence of the directors proves that the crushing of the last season was intended more as a test of the efficiency of the machinery for crushing (*vide* Mr. Ironsides' and the Secretary's evidence) than for purposes of profit. The yield of cane last year on the small farms was very low indeed, in many cases not being more than 2 tons to the acre. It cannot, therefore, be said that the central mill system, so far as North Eton is concerned, has had any opportunity of fully demonstrating whether the system is to be successful or otherwise. When Mr. Hodgkinson visited North Eton a meeting of the farmers was called to consult with him upon the question of the desirability of erecting a central sugar mill in that locality. Various small farmers came forward and affirmed their willingness to grow cane exclusively by European labour, and to show their *bona fides* in the matter, signed an undertaking to duly execute a bill of encumbrance and mortgage their deeds to the Government as security for the advances necessary for the erection of a mill and buildings. At that time the seasons had been favourable, and the yield of cane had often averaged 30 tons to the acre. In the season of 1885 Mr. George Ironsides, one of the largest shareholders in the company, received upwards of £700 for the produce of his crop of 70 acres. Other selectors had been equally successful, and there appeared at that time

North Eton
Central Sugar
Company,
Limited.

Central mills.

see page
XIV

time every prospect that sufficient cane would be grown by the surrounding farmers to keep the mill going during the crushing season. The drought, however, has most seriously altered the complexion of affairs since Mr. Hodgkinson's visit. Moreover, some of the selectors, as will be seen from the evidence, have altered their opinions, and now affirm that, owing to the low price of sugar and the bad seasons, they cannot undertake any longer to grow sugar exclusively by European labour.

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(B.) But the most serious matter in connection with the North Eton Central Mill is the following:—It would appear from the official returns that twenty shareholders signed the bill of encumbrance in 1886, and undertook to mortgage their deeds to the Government as security for the necessary advances in connection with the erection of a mill and buildings. Out of these twenty shareholders, according to the evidence of the secretary of the company, only four at that time had their deeds from the Government. The others, it would appear, were homestead and conditional selectors and would receive their deeds in due course of time. The bill of encumbrance appears to have been registered in the Supreme Court on the 14th of October, 1886. One of the largest shareholders in the company was Mr. Joseph Antony. This gentleman took up 500 shares at £12 10s. each, representing £6,250. He was not at that time a freeholder, but he became a freeholder in September, 1888, and his deeds were forwarded to him in the ordinary manner without the encumbrance being endorsed upon them. Shortly afterwards he deposited them with one of the banks at Mackay and obtained an advance upon them. Other shareholders have also received their deeds, and, so far as can be gathered from the evidence, without the encumbrance endorsed upon them. The secretary of the company stated in the course of examination that he wrote to the Registrar of Titles, who had previously endorsed the bill of encumbrance on one of the freeholder's deeds, and asked him if it was true that deeds had been issued to shareholders of the North Eton Central Sugar Company, Limited, from the Real Property Office, without the encumbrance being endorsed on them; and the answer he received from the Registrar of Titles was that he could not give the information, and that it would be too much trouble to search and find it out. The Secretary further stated that upon receipt of that letter he wrote to the Colonial Treasurer, under date the 8th of December, 1888, asking him to be good enough to obtain the necessary information for him, and up to the time of the witness giving his evidence he had received no reply. It will be observed that Mr. Antony's liability to the company was £6,250 or one-fourth of the total amount which has been advanced to the North Eton Company, and for this amount the Government now hold no security, as the deed which Mr. Antony undertook to mortgage to the Government for the security of the advance has been handed by him to a bank for pecuniary advances.

encumbrance not endorsed on certain deeds.

note

(C.) So far as this company generally is concerned, I am bound to state that there appears upon the evidence a want of business capacity in its management. No books had apparently been kept up to the commencement of this year, when a set of books appears to have been received from the office of the Auditor-General. The secretary, whom we examined, had only occupied that position for six months, and he was unable to give the Commission any information as to the operations of the company prior to his appointment. Nor had any balance-sheet been prepared and distributed among the shareholders as provided in the Articles of Association. But sufficient evidence was given by the directors to show that there was an evident want of care in the management of the company, more particularly in the direction of expenditure. The cost of the mill is out of all proportion to the amount of cane which was undertaken to be grown. At the utmost the small farmers in the immediate neighbourhood of North Eton did not at that time undertake to supply cane from more than 400 acres, and in place of a very expensive mill which has cost about £25,000 being erected, a smaller mill that would have cost about £5,000—such as the one erected on Mr. McCredie's plantation—would have been quite large enough as a commencement, and the residue of the money could have been very well spent in obtaining and laying down portable tramways so as to have brought all the shareholders who have undertaken the growing of cane into immediate communication with the central mill. I cannot but think that had such a course as this been adopted, the success of the North Eton Central Mill would be much more likely to be assured than

Want of business capacity in management North Eton Company.

2

than it is at the present time. It is clear from the testimony of the witnesses examined that, under existing circumstances, it will take a very long time, and a further expenditure for tramways will be necessary, before the mill can be made a success.

Racecourse
Central Mill.

note (D.) The Racecourse Central Mill has only just been completed, and has never yet been worked. Its cost in Glasgow was £9,897, and it was purchased from Messrs. Merlees, Tait, and Watson. Without question it is one of the finest mills in the Northern districts, and comprises all the latest improvements; the vacuum pan is of the latest and newest design, and was awarded a prize at an exhibition held shortly before its purchase by the company. The original cost of the mill is said by those who are conversant with sugar machinery to be exceedingly reasonable, and the mill is declared by experts to be one of the most complete sugar mills in the Mackay district. The freight, and the cost of erection, together with the buildings, amounted to a little over £11,000, making the total outlay £21,000. But, however reasonable the original cost of the mill may have been, there can be no doubt that the same remarks which are made in reference to the North Eton Mill apply with equal force to this mill. It is too large for the amount of sugar cane likely to be provided at present by the small farmers, and if a mill had been erected at a cost of one-fourth of the amount, it would have been ample for all the purposes of the farmers, and they also would have had £15,000 at their disposal to lay down tramways to their various cane fields, without which there does not appear to be any immediate prospect of this mill becoming a success. The railway is practically of very little use to the small farmers in bringing cane to the Racecourse Mill, and as the land is low—in wet seasons the roads are almost impassable—tramways are a necessary auxiliary to the central mill system, just as much as they are a necessary auxiliary on all large plantations. When the Racecourse Central Sugar Company, Limited, was formed seventeen shareholders signed the bill of encumbrance, representing 525 shares, and the aggregate amount of the capital was £15,750. The total amount advanced to the company out of the central mill vote is £21,000. When Mr. Hodgkinson attended the meeting in the vicinity of the Racecourse, twenty-seven farmers undertook to grow cane for the mill exclusively by European labour. Out of that number seventeen became shareholders in the company, and undertook to mortgage the deeds of their land as security for the advances required for the complete erection of the mill. From the evidence of Mr. Pearce, the manager of the company, and from that of two of the directors, who are also shareholders, it is found that the area of the land then held by many of the farmers has been reduced, while in other cases the farmers have admitted that they have changed their opinions, and now declare that they are unable to grow cane without coloured labour. So far as can be gathered from the statements of the chairman and board of directors, the money advanced to the Racecourse Central Sugar Company appears to have been judiciously expended, and the company has one of the best and most complete sugar mills in the Northern portion of the colony, but, as before stated, its capacity is largely in excess of present requirements.

Central mill
system—
generally—
co-operative
mill in the
Logan district.

note (E.) With respect to the question of the central mill system generally, I believe from investigation that it contains within it the elements of success, if properly applied. That this is so is very clearly demonstrated in the case of a small company formed at Eaglesby in the Logan district. There, seven German farmers agreed to form themselves into a co-operative company, about seven or eight years ago, and they obtained from one of the banks an advance of £4,000, with which they erected a mill quite sufficient for their requirements, and which in our opinion would have been quite large enough for either of the central mill sugar companies in the Mackay district. They bound themselves to grow cane for their mill on areas amounting in the aggregate to something like 100 or 140 acres. The cane was sold to the mill at 8s. a ton, and with that price they were perfectly satisfied. They grew the cane entirely by their own labour with the assistance of members of their families, and the result is that they have reduced the debt, with interest from £4,000 to £700, and had it not been for the severe drought, and the heavy flood of January, 1887, it is more than probable that nearly the whole of the £4,000 would have been liquidated. But even in

the

the face of the disaster of the flood, and the equally ruinous drought, they have undoubtedly proved that the central mill system, when conducted on well defined principles, can be made a success. My opinion is, that this is one of the solutions of the sugar question. In the course of time as the larger plantations become clear of scrub, and the land is stumped and made ready for the plough, the leasing of the land to small farmers will be generally carried out, and the central mill system will become one of the elements in the future success of the sugar industry of the colony. At Pinalba, where sugar cane growing can, in my opinion, be made a very important industry, the German and Danish farmers, who are there in large numbers, declare that if the Government will erect a central mill for them they will gladly undertake to grow cane exclusively by white labour, and they are quite confident that they can make it a success.

15. Summarised the causes of the depression in the sugar industry in this colony are, in my opinion:—

Summary of
causes of
depression in
sugar industry.

- (a.) The unnecessarily large areas held by planters compared with the small area actually cultivated, and the consequent payment of interest on the large unproductive area.
- (b.) The erection of mills quite disproportionate to the area of cane under cultivation.
- (c.) The sudden and continuous fall in the price of sugar arising from the keen competition of sugar produced from beetroot.
- (d.) The financial embarrassment of many of the planters, owing to their working on borrowed capital bearing a high rate of interest, which, with the working expenses, is entirely chargeable to the small area of cultivated land.
- (e.) The disastrous drought of the last two years which has seriously diminished the production of sugar, the export for 1888 being not more than one-half what it was in 1887; and the prospect of an equally diminished output for the present year, owing to the continued drought, the rain having come too late to insure a full crop for the coming season.
- (f.) A general want of confidence on the part of monetary institutions in the sugar industry, arising from the foregoing circumstances, and the probability of the keen competition of the beetroot sugar continuing for some time to come.

note

16. As to the means to be adopted for reviving and maintaining the prosperity of the sugar industry throughout the colony I find the question one of extreme difficulty. The planters themselves, in the more Northern portions of the colony, ask to be supplied with cheap and reliable labour, and for a reciprocity treaty to be entered into with the Australasian colonies. On both of these questions, as I have already pointed out, there is a strong conflict of opinion. On the first suggested remedy Parliament has pronounced an emphatic opinion, and has passed a statute limiting the time when the cheap, reliable labour asked for is to cease and determine. The reciprocity treaty is a question of public policy which must be solely determined by the Legislature. From the present depressed condition of the sugar industry, in all countries where sugar is manufactured from cane, it is clear that the depression is not confined to Queensland alone. The sugar planters in the West Indies have almost been ruined by the extreme competition of beetroot sugar, although in those islands they have an abundance of coloured labour. Fronde, in his recent work on the West Indian Islands, mentions the case of a plantation in Jamaica, valued by the owners at £60,000, but £12,000 could not be obtained for it. Even in countries where cheap labour is easily obtainable, such as Java, Mauritius, and Natal, the depression exists, and is likely to continue; nor have any means been suggested by which in other countries any relief can be applied. The abolition of the bounty system was one measure of relief proposed by the Government of Great Britain, at the International Sugar Conference at London, and the terms of the draft convention agreed to practically abolishes the bounty system, and

Means for
reviving and
maintaining
prosperity of the
industry.

note
and the convention is to be ratified by the high contracting parties on the 1st of August of this year. It is to come into operation on the 1st of August, 1890, and to remain in force for ten years. Great expectations are formed that the abolition of the bounty system will assist the sugar industry of the British colonies, and it is in this direction, we think, where relief will be partially afforded. I am also of opinion, after careful and mature deliberation, that a great deal of the capital which is invested in the sugar industry, and which has come from places outside of Queensland, will necessarily be lost, and all that the Legislature can do to assist the planters will not prevent it. In my opinion many of the plantations are hopelessly encumbered, and the same fate which has overtaken the Hamleigh plantation must of necessity, in the course of time, overtake others. However much we may regret such a result, and sympathise with those involved in it, there does not appear to be any alternative. When the plantations are not worked on borrowed capital, and when there are no heavy burdens on the estates in the form of accumulated interest, then I think there may be an opportunity of making the sugar industry more profitable than it is at present. For the smaller growers, as I have already intimated, I believe the central mill system, if conducted on well-defined principles, will prove an ultimate success.

17. In the districts situated between Port Douglas and Mackay, including Townsville, the Herbert River, the Johnstone, and the Russell, I directed my attention very largely to the subject of tropical agriculture. It is quite apparent that a very large area of the coast lands in these districts is adapted for the growth of tropical fruits. Bananas, mangoes, and pineapples grow with the utmost profusion, and if properly cultivated and some more satisfactory means could be adopted for their shipment to all the Australian capitals, there is certainly a great field for the opening up of a large and important industry. In the Port Douglas district we visited the garden of Mr. Montgomery, which is situated on the Mowbray River. It may fairly be taken as a test illustration of what can be done in tropical agriculture with scientific knowledge and careful culture. Mr. Montgomery's selection comprises an area of 160 acres. It is nearly all under cultivation, a very large proportion bearing fruit trees of every description. The mango trees on this selection were very numerous and were loaded with fruit; in fact it is no exaggeration to say that tons of mangoes were lying on the ground rotting for want of a market. The mango is a fruit which ripens quickly and requires rapid transit in order that it may reach the market in a saleable condition and yield profitable returns to the grower. If this desirable result could be achieved, then undoubtedly hundreds of cases of mangoes would beset to all the large centres of population on the coast. In the district of Port Douglas, limes, oranges, bananas, and man goes grow luxuriantly and the yield is very heavy, but in all cases the great difficulty the grower has to contend with is that of reaching a market, and this applies not only to markets by way of the sea, but also to those reached by means of internal communication. Many of the farmers reside in localities where the roads are in a very primitive condition, and where the difficulties of conveying their produce to market are almost insurmountable. While in the Cairns district, I was informed by one selector from the Russell River that he even offered nearly 1,000 bushels of maize to anyone who would take it away, but such is the condition of that district, so far as the roads are concerned, that no one would accept the offer, and he had to set fire to the crop (*vide* question 2261). In Port Douglas the selectors labour under similar disadvantages, and the question arises how their position can be remedied? The roads are under the care of divisional boards, but the revenue derived from rates is so small that, even with the Government endowment, it goes a very little way indeed in putting the roads in anything like a satisfactory condition. Many of the larger streams are bridgeless, and are likely to continue so unless some special provision is made by Parliament to assist the boards to bridge them. Agricultural settlement cannot be advanced, nor can the area of land cultivated increase, unless better provision is made and larger facilities are provided for the transit of produce to a profitable market. So far as we could gather from the evidence of the witnesses, scarcely any of the farmers or selectors in the Port Douglas district were making anything more than a bare living. Indeed, one of the most enterprising of their number, and one who has spent ten years in proving to demonstration what the district is capable of producing, informed us that he expected every moment to be

turned

Tropical
agriculture.

Difficulties in
conveying produce
to market.

turned out of his selection by those who held his title deeds. The banana yields a large crop, and if the fruit could be disposed of to advantage would unquestionably give a large profit, but we learned from the witnesses examined at Port Douglas and Cairns that the difficulties of shipment, and the mode in which the fruit is carried to market—unless speedily altered—are likely to lead to the discontinuance of the growth of the article. I was informed that in December last, a week or two preceding Christmas, bananas to the value of £300 or £400 were shipped from Port Douglas by the “Cintra,” expressly to meet the Sydney and Melbourne markets at Christmas time. The Sydney fruit arrived in a tolerably fair condition, but that consigned to Melbourne was perfectly rotten on arrival, and the consignees refused to accept it; the result was a dead loss to the shippers. Complaints were also made by Mr. Montgomery and others in the Port Douglas district of the loss of fruit by pilfering on the voyage. Mr. Daniel Hart stated in his evidence that out of forty cases of oranges that he sent to Brisbane twelve cases were completely empty when they were received by the consignee. Nor is this evidence at all exceptional; the bulk of the testimony given by the principal growers of the North was one continuous story of losses by bad treatment on board the vessels, and of losses by pilfering, and to such an extent has it been carried on that many of the growers have discontinued shipping, and allow their fruit to rot in the gardens. The result has been that the progress of the fruit growing industry in the North has been greatly retarded, and the employment of labour seriously interfered with; and it has also tended to create a feeling of dissatisfaction in the minds of those already settled on the lands of the North, and a belief that it is useless for them to remain there, but that they had better go to other places where a market is more easy of access, and where their productions when grown will receive better treatment at the hands of shippers and others. An explanation in connection with the shipping of fruit to the southern colonies was obtained from the manager of the A.U.S.N. Company, who was examined, and whom I felt it my duty to make acquainted with the serious nature of the allegations which had been made by Northern fruit growers. That gentleman admitted that many of the complaints were not groundless, but stated that everything the company could do to mitigate the evil had been tried, and he was in expectation that other remedies would yet be applied with the view of putting a stop to the stealing of fruit on the up and down trips of coastal steamers, but unfortunately he did not deal with the greater question of the more rapid transit of fruit to the large centres of population.

Difficulties
respecting
carriage of
fruit by sea.

Theft of fruit
in transit.

18. Banana growing is an important industry of Fiji, and regularly steamers arrive at the ports of Sydney and Melbourne with cargoes of from 15,000 to 25,000 bunches, and these come into active competition with the Queensland grown bananas. It is of importance to the Queensland grower, if his industry is to be at all a successful one, that his fruit should arrive in the Sydney and Melbourne markets in an equally sound condition as the bananas imported from Fiji. But herein lies the difficulty: the distance of Fiji from Sydney is 2,000 miles; there is only one port of call in the whole distance, and the fruit on the steamers is in no way interfered with from the time of its being placed on board the steamer until it is landed at the port of Sydney, and the voyage only occupies seven days. The distance from Port Douglas to Melbourne is a little over 1,800 miles, and owing to the numerous ports of call, and the delay of two days in Brisbane and two days in Sydney, very often with five or six transshipments, the voyage occupies fourteen days, and the Queensland bananas arrive at the market in the condition above described. Thus it will be seen what enormous shipping advantages the Fiji grower has over the grower in Queensland, and how necessary it is that some very decisive action should be taken if the banana industry of the North is to be at all fostered and encouraged; and we have no hesitation in saying that, outside of sugar growing, it is one of the greatest industries of the Northern districts, and is capable of unlimited expansion provided that proper means are employed to convey the fruit to market. The banana is capable of being made up in different ways. On the Daintree River there is a banana drying establishment, which is producing an excellent article of trade that commands a ready sale in the market. At the Hambleton plantation the Messrs. Swallow have erected a large fruit drying establishment capable of preserving 5000 bananas a day, and they are also about to preserve this fruit

Fiji banana
trade.

Banana
preserving.

in

Limes, lemons,
and oranges.

Need of
increased
facilities for
conveying fruit
to market.

West Indian
trade in tropical
fruit—method of
shipment.

Measures
necessary to
foster and
develop tropical
fruit trade of
Queensland.

in syrup as well as in boxes in a dry state, not unlike that of the Turkish fig, so that with the various methods in which the banana can be converted into articles of commerce there is an unlimited field for its culture, and with proper facilities for conveying it to market it can be made one of the most useful and profitable industries that Queensland possesses. It is also to be remarked that limes and lemons and oranges grow luxuriantly. The limes, which in the West Indies form a most important article of trade, are allowed in the North to go to waste, simply because there is no market for them, and the same may be said of the lemon and the orange. One or two witnesses stated that they had tried to open up a trade with the disposers of fruit in the city of Brisbane, and a few consignments were made to them, but the result was not at all satisfactory, and the experiment is not likely to be repeated under present conditions. They feel the need of a central depôt in Brisbane, to which their fruit could be sent and disposed of at times when the market is ready for it, and not be placed in an auction room immediately after being received, and sold at any price, no matter what the consequences may be to the grower. The evidence on this point is very strong indeed, and deserves the utmost consideration. The area of land fit for the cultivation of tropical fruits in the coast districts north of Mackay is practically unlimited, and there is room for the settlement of a large industrial population to be engaged in the fruit industry, if only proper facilities can be provided for conveying the fruit to market. It is clear, however, that unless some assistance is given to the farmers and selectors in the Northern districts who are engaged in tropical agriculture in the form of better roads and bridges over creeks and rivers, and facilities for shipping their fruit quickly and speedily to the various centres of population, very little progress will be made in the North in the direction of tropical industries. The present selectors are the pioneers of civilisation in those districts; they are opening up lands which have been practically closed to the white population; they are enduring all the trials, difficulties, and privations which are incidental to early settlement, and on these grounds I respectfully submit that they are entitled to the most favourable consideration of Your Excellency's Advisers and the Legislature. At the same time I quite admit that neither the Government nor the Parliament can do everything. Those who receive large sums of money from the Northern districts in the shape of freight on produce, have a fair and just claim on them to consider their constituents. The Northern trade of the colony is virtually in the hands of one company, presumably influential and wealthy, and if they desire to foster the trade of the North, and encourage the settlement of population there, and induce settlement on the public lands so as to increase their commercial enterprise, then they are bound to consider what are the best means they can adopt to assist those who are already there and who are opening up the resources of a hitherto comparatively unknown country.

In the West Indian Islands where the depression in the sugar industry is largely felt, attention has been directed to the cultivation of tropical fruits, and to the enormous market which New York presented for their consumption. The climate of the West Indies is identical with that of Northern Queensland, and the same fruits which are grown in the West Indies are grown in the Northern coast districts of Queensland. The shipping companies trading between the West Indies and New York have given every facility possible for the conveyance of tropical fruits from the West Indian Islands. They have prepared many of their steamers especially for the carriage of fruit, the bananas instead of being stored in holds or packed on the deck eight or ten feet high, as we saw them in some of the steamers in the North of this colony, rendering them in a very short time totally unfit for market, are placed in racks, so that not one bunch presses on another, and full ventilation is afforded. The cases are also arranged in such a way that pillage is impossible, and the safety of the cargo is thoroughly insured. The result is that a trade has been opened up between the West Indian Islands and New York, which is now assuming large proportions, and is likely to lead to the most beneficial results as far as the population of the West Indian Islands is concerned. It is my opinion that if the fruit industry of the North is to be established on a permanent basis, and a large population is to be encouraged to settle on its rich coast lands, the following improvements will have to be effected:—

(a.) The establishment of one or more quick-going steamers specially fitted for the carriage of fruit, open and in cases, to call at the various ports north of Mackay, and then proceed direct to Melbourne and Sydney, carrying fruit, passengers, and

and mails. As already pointed out the voyage from Fiji to Sydney occupies seven days, and the fruit from the Fiji Islands is thus landed in a profitable market in a sound marketable condition. At present the fruit from the North of Queensland has to undergo a journey of fourteen days, and in its then frequently rotten and unwholesome condition has to compete with the sound saleable fruit of the Fijian Islands. By lessening the time for the steamers to travel between the tropical fruit-growing districts in the North, and the large centres of consumption in the South, the fruit will arrive in an excellent condition, and will thus be in a position to compete with the tropical fruits from Fiji. Steamers specially told off for the conveyance of tropical fruit would, I believe, be largely supported by the Northern people, and the knowledge that such a vast improvement in the conveyance of fruit would take place would give a great stimulus to the industry, would not only encourage those who have already invested their capital in the enterprise, but would also lead to larger areas of land being placed under fruit, and thus add materially to the resources of the Northern districts. For a time I believe it would pay the colony—even if the trade itself did not prove payable—to subsidise one or more steamers until the fruit industry of the North is sufficiently developed to create a remunerative sea trade. *note*

(b.) Assistance to be rendered to the poorer divisions of the North, whose revenues are necessarily small and who are unable, owing to the large area of their roads and the nature of the country—frequently low-lying, and in the wet season, in many cases, covered with water—to form roads sufficiently passable to admit of the conveyance of the produce of the farms to the seaport towns. And also liberal assistance towards the erection of bridges over many of the rivers and creeks which now render settlement on the public lands in many places almost impossible. The condition of the roads and streams surrounding selections is a serious drawback to the prosperity of those who have already taken up agricultural lands. The evidence of the selectors on the Mossman and Mowbray Rivers at Port Douglas, on the Russell and Mulgrave Rivers at Cairns, and on the Herbert River, clearly proves that unless assistance of some kind in the direction indicated is given, further settlement in those districts will practically cease. At present the cost of conveying produce to the port of deportation is a serious charge upon the farmers and fruit growers, and in many instances the fruit is allowed to rot on the ground rather than extra expense should be incurred in sending it to market, and the same remarks will apply to agricultural produce. It costs farmers on the Herbert River £2 5s. a ton to send their produce down to Townsville, while the freight for a similar distance by railway would not amount to more than 5s. or 6s. a ton. The Northern farmers are thus most seriously handicapped in the matter of freight, and considering that the whole of them have to compete against imported produce from the Southern colonies, which is carried by sea at a very low rate, the difficulties of their position can be well understood; in fact, it is clear from the evidence, and a close personal inspection of the districts named, that unless means are adopted to lessen the cost of carriage of both fruit and agricultural produce to market, the progress of agriculture and fruit growing in those districts will be very seriously retarded, and may probably cease altogether.

19. A very large proportion of the Northern districts is of recent settlement, and the farmers who have selected land or have purchased considerable areas, as many of them have done, have not a practical knowledge of what the land is capable of growing. The fruit grown in the North is distinct altogether from that grown in the temperate zones, where most of the farmers have previously resided, and consequently there is a great lack of information as to what the tropical regions are capable of producing. From the evidence of Mr. Daniel Hart and Mr. Montgomery, and other practical farmers like them, it is evident that coffee can be profitably grown in the North; but there is a want of knowledge as to the proper method of growing it, and also of manufacturing it into coffee when it is grown. The lime, the orange, the lemon, and the citron can also be grown there with the utmost profusion, but practical information is required as to the best varieties to be grown, the diseases to which these fruit trees are liable, and the remedies to be applied to ward off the attacks of their enemies. I am, therefore, of opinion that two or more experimental farms should be established in the Northern districts, in charge of thoroughly practical men, well versed in tropical agriculture, and able to impart valuable theoretical and practical information to the farmers and selectors. *Experimental farms.* *note*

selectors as to what articles of commercial value can be grown most profitably. It was impossible to visit the various farms in the different districts of the North without being struck in many instances with the primitive mode of cultivation adopted with regard to tropical fruit-growing—a fair indication that there was wanting that practical and scientific information by which alone success can be attained in any kind of agriculture. I believe that the establishment of two or more experimental farms in the Northern districts would be of incalculable value to those who have made these districts their homes, and who are desirous of becoming permanent colonists. There is, without question, an unlimited field for the growth of tropical fruits; the soil is rich, and the area of land adapted for the cultivation of fruit trees is practically unlimited, and, with the adoption of the means we have already suggested, we believe there is a great future for the North so far as tropical fruit growing is concerned. Almost without exception, the whole of the witnesses—and some of them were very practical, hard-headed men, accustomed to agriculture from their youth—admitted the absolute necessity for experimental farms in their various localities in order that the best information obtainable should be afforded them as to what can be grown most profitably. In the West Indian Islands—more particularly in Jamaica—the Government have established what are known there as “Botanical Stations,” and they have proved of great value to the tropical fruit growers of those islands in educating them as to the best fruits to be grown, their mode of culture, their treatment, and how best to dispose of them when they arrive at maturity. It is our opinion that similar “Botanical Stations,” placed in charge of thoroughly practical men who have a well-grounded knowledge of the cultivation of tropical fruits, would be of immense value to the farmers in the Northern districts, and materially assist them in the carrying out of their industry.

Area of land
selected in the
Northern
unoccupied.

20. I cannot close this Report without drawing the attention of the Government and the Legislature to the enormous area of unoccupied lands in the Northern districts, which, from the evidence of many witnesses, is a serious drawback to the progress of settlement and to the further selection of land. In the Port Douglas district there are 56,384 acres of land selected, but there are only 3,000 acres under cultivation. On the Daintree River, for twenty-three miles on either side, the land has all been selected, but it remains unoccupied, and there are only four resident homestead selectors in the whole of that distance. In the Cairns district there are 80,000 acres selected, and the total area of land under cultivation does not amount to more than 5,500 acres, and it is estimated that there are not more than 3,000 acres in the whole district outside of sugar under cultivation. In the Ingham district, which includes the Herbert River, there are 202,161 acres selected, of which area 5,933 acres are under cane, and only 400 acres under cultivation other than by cane. It is estimated that in this district there are at least 120,000 acres made freehold, and these freeholds are practically unoccupied. In the Townsville district, which includes the Burdekin Delta, there are 272,064 acres selected; the area of land under cultivation by sugar is 2,240 acres; under cultivation otherwise than by sugar, 450 acres. In the Mackay district there are 420,520 acres selected, of which 24,302 acres are under cultivation, 17,422 being under sugar cane, and the balance under cultivation other than by cane. It is estimated that in the Mackay district there are 140,000 acres made freehold, and not now occupied. Most of these lands have been selected on the various streams of the Northern districts. On the Herbert River it is estimated that from Ingham to a distance of thirty miles west of the town, the whole of the land has been selected on either side of the river. On the Mossman, the Mowbray, the Russell, the Mulgrave, and the Tully the same thing has occurred, and it was the opinion of witnesses that the taking up of these large areas with water frontages had rendered a large extent of back country comparatively useless, and retarded settlement in the North very materially. I admit that this question is outside the Commission, but the facts adduced in evidence were so striking that I could not refrain from specially alluding to them in this Report.

I have the honour to be,
Your Excellency's most obedient Servant,

W. H. GROOM,

Parliamentary Buildings,
11th April, 1889.

Chairman of the Sugar Industry Commission.

1889.

QUEENSLAND.

SUGAR INDUSTRY COMMISSION.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE

THE ROYAL COMMISSION

APPOINTED TO

INQUIRE INTO THE GENERAL CONDITION OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN QUEENSLAND, AND TO REPORT UPON THE CAUSES WHICH HAVE LED TO THE PRESENT LANGUISHING CONDITION OF THE INDUSTRY THROUGHOUT THE COLONY, THE BEST MEANS TO BE ADOPTED FOR REVIVING AND MAINTAINING ITS PROSPERITY, AND, GENERALLY, UPON THE PROSPECTS OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE IN QUEENSLAND.

THURSDAY, 10 JANUARY, 1889.

(At Port Douglas.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

ARTHUR EDWARD PYWELL examined:

1. You are Acting Sub-collector of Customs at Port Douglas? Yes.
2. Are you able to give the Commission any statistical information, such as the returns of the exports of agricultural produce and fruit from this district? Yes; of all the exports for 1888, if you only want the larger items, not the smaller.
3. Will you kindly state them? Bananas: 35,124 bunches, valued at £4,125; 41 cases, valued at £51; sugar: 366 tons 19 cwt. 0 qrs., valued at £7,334; pineapples: 253 cases, valued at £197; passion-fruit: 27 cases, valued at £17.
4. *By Mr. King*: Is the sugar the produce of the Port Douglas District? Yes; of a few small plantations.
5. *By the Chairman*: Were there any mangoes sent away? Yes; but not in any quantity, only five or six cases.
6. *By Mr. King*: More than that? Not in the exports. I have returns of the products of the district exported beyond the colony, but not of the produce exported to other ports in Queensland. I can let you have the other returns to-morrow.

B

7. *By*

- A. E. Pywell.
10 Jan., 1888.
7. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is there any sugar being exported from the Mossman? No.
8. *By the Chairman*: Are you, as Sub-collector of Customs, able to give an account of the agricultural produce of the district, and of the exports of produce from Port Douglas to Brisbane and the various other Queensland ports? I cannot give you any more than the exports beyond the colony.
9. What has become of maize-growing in Port Douglas? That will be shown in the district returns.
10. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you know of any farming that is being carried on? No; I have only been here during the past two years.
11. *By Mr. King*: What prices are derived by the growers for those exports and products? I could not tell you that.
12. Do you know what freights are charged for the conveyance of this fruit? I don't know.
13. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you think that facilities afforded for the export of produce are sufficient? I think so.
14. *By Mr. King*: Have you had no complaints from owners of produce, of the want of proper accommodation? No; I have had no complaints.
15. *By the Chairman*: Do you think that the growers of fruit are satisfied with the returns they receive for it? I think growers are.
16. *By Mr. King*: Can you state what the nationality of the growers of fruit is principally? Is fruit growing carried on by Europeans or Chinamen? Chiefly Chinamen.
17. Is there any export of oranges, limes, or lemons? Very little.
18. Do you know whether any tropical product such as coffee, tobacco, and rice, or any other kind is cultivated in the district? I think a little coffee is grown at Dan Hart's.
19. Where is that? On the Mossman.
20. Do you know whether the growing of that coffee is a success? I do not know whether it turned out a success or not. I tasted some of the coffee and it made me feel very ill. I only tried it once.
21. *By the Chairman*: You say you have been in this district two years? Two years in April.
22. Do you think that if any encouragement were given by legislation for the growth of tropical fruits, that advantage would be taken of it in the district? I believe so. There is fine land for fruit on the Daintree. The facilities for shipping fruit are against its production.
23. When Mr. Cowley asked you just now a question with regard to the matter of shipping, the point which we wanted elicited was to hear from you, as officer in charge of the Customs here, whether you thought that the facilities for export were such as to encourage the growth of the articles already referred to? I meant in connection with getting the products of the Mossman here.
24. In your opinion at present it is not sufficient? I can't speak from experience; I have not been long enough here.
25. Have you heard any of the growers say that if larger facilities were afforded them they would be stimulated to grow more than they do now? Yes. I think they would.
26. Is the mango a fruit that grows well in this district? Yes; very well.
27. Is it sent away from this district to Queensland ports, and to ports other than those in this colony? It is sent to Brisbane and Melbourne.
28. *By Mr. Cowley*: In those returns you produced you point out that there are only five or six cases of mangoes sent away from the colony? Mangoes are sent away in very small quantities from here.
29. Are there many sent to Sydney, or to Melbourne, or to Brisbane, or to Northern ports such as Norman-ton? No; only to Brisbane and Melbourne.
30. *By the Chairman*: Do you know if any rice has been grown in this district? Yes; rice has been grown here.
31. Successfully? I think so, on the Daintree.
32. Do you know if any has been exported from this port? Yes; some rice has been exported. The amount will be in the district returns.
33. *By Mr. Cowley*: If you have not visited the places you cannot tell us much about the farms? No.
34. Can you tell us from your own knowledge what labour is used? No.

[The following is the return supplied by the witness, showing the quantity of produce exported from Port Douglas during 1888 to other ports in Queensland]:—

PRODUCE OF THE PORT DOUGLAS DISTRICT REMOVED COASTWISE FROM THE PORT OF PORT DOUGLAS FOR THE YEAR ended 31st DECEMBER, 1888.

Articles.	Quantity.	Value.
Sugar ...	5 tons	£
Mangoes ...	99 cases	125
Fruit (undescribed) ...	361 "	42
Oranges ...	287 "	239
Lemons ...	65 "	207
Rice ...	10 tons 5 cwt.	65
Limes ...	120 cases	221
Pineapples ...	24 "	120
Dried Bananas ...	26 "	15
Cocoa ...	25 bags	15
Maize ...	5,949 bushel	30
Bananas ...	4,521 bunches	914
Ducks ...	16 cases	340
Fowls ...	35 "	25
		51

A. E. PYWELL, Acting S.C.

RICHARD

RICHARD OWEN JONES, called in and examined :

35. *By the Chairman* : What are you, Mr. Jones ? I am a farmer. I have been a farmer for the last eight years on the Mossman in this district, and I am now a produce merchant in Port Douglas. R. O. Jones.
10 Jan., 1889.
36. Do you still carry on your farm in connection with your business ? No, I do not at present.
37. What articles of produce do you principally deal with in your business ? Principally maize.
38. I am speaking of the local products, not of the produce you import ? Exactly.
39. About how much maize do you deal with in the course of a year ? About 400 tons pass through my hands.
40. Do you deal with any fruit ? Yes, principally bananas, mangoes, and oranges.
41. Can you give us any idea of how many you deal with in the course of a year, or their value ? Yes. Bananas in bunches—about 8,000 a year.
42. Mangoes ? From 400 to 500 cases.
43. Where do the mangoes go to chiefly from Port Douglas ? To Brisbane, Sydney, and various other Southern towns.
44. You say you have been a farmer in this district for eight years ? Yes.
45. Are you well acquainted with the lands all round the district ? Yes, for miles.
46. Is the land adapted for the growing of maize ? Yes ; but I do not think that the climate is particularly suitable.
47. *By Mr. King* : What is the average price of maize per bushel ? About 3s. 6d. per bushel.
48. What is the average yield per acre on the farms ? I think about twenty-five bushels.
49. Not more than twenty-five bushels ? I think not. It is occasionally a complete failure. In good seasons the average is from twenty-five to forty bushels per acre, and there are exceptional cases when it sometimes goes as high as eighty bushels per acre.
50. How many crops a year do they get ? As a rule, two ; but in some cases, where everything is favourable, you get three. The land has always been in crop, except in exceptional cases like this year, when we have had so much drought.
51. Is the maize grown here consumed in the district, or exported to other parts ? All consumed in this district. We have exported nothing to speak of this year.
52. Is the cultivation of maize increasing in this district ? No. It has been decreasing for the past two years.
53. What is the reason for that ? Maize is principally grown by the Chinese, and they work only with the hoe. After the first two or three years of maize growing the grass gets into the ground, and as it cannot be kept under, the maize crop is of no account. It would require to be ploughed after the first three years to profitably grow maize.
54. Why do not the Europeans grow maize ? At the end of the three years scrubbing and burning off all the principal stumps are still left in the ground, and it means a heavy expense to grub it. All the land under cultivation is scrub country.
55. Then Europeans will not grow maize unless the ground is fit for the plough ? I don't say that ; but they cannot afford the expense of grubbing at the rate of £15 or £20 per acre, and they allow the Chinese to grow it for them by hoe for two or three years longer.
56. Then Europeans won't cultivate with the hoe ? They can't make a living by it ; neither can the Chinese themselves after the grass gets into the ground.
57. *By Mr. Cowley* : Sometimes the crop entirely fails.—What is the cause of that ? Either extreme dry or extreme wet weather.
58. Do you actually get three crops off the same soil ? Yes ;—that is, off the same ground. To do so the Chinese plant fresh crops between the rows of growing maize, and as they are getting the first crop off the other is coming through the ground.
59. Have you any land stumped and ploughed in the district ? Yes.
60. The scrub land I mean ? Yes. Mr. Montgomerie, of Mayfield, on the Mowbray, has, I think, about 160 acres. There is also I think, about 80 acres cleared at Bribrie.
61. Do you say that of your own knowledge ? I know of two farms at Saltwater Creek, but that is forest country, largely timbered, but it is suitable for corn growing.
62. Where the lands are ploughed, are they in the hands of the white farmers still ? All those lands are in the hands of white farmers.
63. You tell us that the Chinese are on the land ? Yes, but the land is in the hands of the whites.
64. How is the land ploughed—what labour is used ? White labour.
65. What has become of the farm you worked for eight years ? Have you leased it to anyone ? A portion is leased on a clearing lease to the Chinese.
66. *By Mr. King* : What rental do you get for those leases ? The rental is simply a matter of form. I got 1s. an acre for five years for land not cleared of scrub, and during these five years the Chinese have to fall the scrub and burn it off, by the end of the fourth year, and all permanent improvements fall back to me at the end of the lease.
67. Is the scrub very heavy on those farms ? Yes, very heavy as a rule, some are covered principally with "lawyer vine," and very heavily timbered.
68. About what price per acre does it cost to burn off ready for planting ? If you use blacks at low wages it will cost £10 per acre.
69. I do not mean burning every log. What is the cost of felling and burning ready for the plough, suppose you intended to put in a crop of cane ? It cost at Bribrie £10 an acre to prepare the ground for planting cane, and then a number of logs were left.
70. What would it cost to stump the land ready for the plough ? To fall the scrub and put it under crop the same year it could not be done for less than from £25 to £30 per acre.
71. *By Mr. Cowley* : After three years' cropping, would then the cost be materially lessened ? Yes ; very much.
72. How much would it cost to get it ready for the plough after the three years during which you say you crop the land—I mean to stump the land already cleared ? About £5 an acre if you employed white labour at present rates.

- R. O. Jones. 73. Do you think you could stump land for £5 an acre after three years with white labour? I think so.
74. Do you know of any such land having been let by contract by white labour? No; but I am judging from the number of lags to be cleared on my own land.
- 10 Jan., 1889. 75. Do you know of any let by contract in the district—have you done so—to white men? No; I have not.
76. Then £5 is simply an estimate; you can't speak from actual experience? Yes; only an estimate.
77. *By Mr. King*: What are the wages paid to white men for farm work? From 30s. to £2 per week.
78. Including rations? Yes; if you expect a man to work. You can get what is known as "a bailiff," simply to reside on the land and comply with the clauses of the Land Act at from £1 to 30s. a week without rations.
79. Were you farming in this district? Yes.
80. Did you employ any other labour besides yourself? Yes; but not very largely.
81. What class of labour did you employ? Black, white, and almost whatever I could get.
82. Did you have any trouble in getting enough for your requirements? Yes.
83. By black labour do you mean aboriginal natives? No; I have employed the aboriginal natives on one or two occasions.
84. Do they work in this district at all? No; with the exception of getting firewood for the townspeople.
85. Then it is South Sea Island labour you employ? Yes.
86. Where the South Sea Islanders "time expired" or "indentured" direct to you? They were men whose time had expired.
87. What rate of wages do you pay those men? From 15s. to 25s. per week with board.
88. Were these good men and able to work? Yes; the South Sea Island labourer is the best we can get here.
89. Do they give you much trouble in management? No; none at all.
90. What wages do you pay to Chinese labourers? £1 a week with rations.
91. Have you had any new chums lately? Yes; I had one or two.
92. Are they able at first to attend to the work? Well, no; they don't seem to stand the sun.
93. Does it affect their health? I can't say that it affects their health. They won't allow it to affect their health; they have too high an opinion of themselves to work so as to allow it to do so.
94. *By the Chairman*: When you employed kanakas at from 15s. to 25s. a week, could you have obtained white labour? Sometimes I could; not on all occasions.
95. What price would you have paid for white labour? I would have had to pay at the most 30s. a week, and it would take an average of two white men to do the work of one kanaka.
96. Then is it for cheapness or otherwise, that you employ the kanaka in preference to the white man? No; not cheapness, chiefly. If I could get white men I would do so—but not for the extra work I can get out of them; but because they are more easily managed and more reliable, I prefer the kanaka. I would be sure to have the kanaka for a definite time, but would never be sure of the European. If a rush takes place, or the rumour of a rush was heard, the Europeans are off, even if they had £2 or £3 coming to them.
97. I understood you to say that you were acquainted with the district round your farm pretty well? Yes.
98. What else can the district grow besides maize, mangoes and bananas? It grows rice well. I can show you samples of locally-grown rice.
99. Can you give the Commission any information on rice growing? Yes.
100. Who grows the rice in this district? I have to go back to the Chinaman for that.
101. The Chinamen grow it? Yes.
102. In quantities? Yes.
103. To what extent? Well, the only year that any quantity had been started was last year. I am sorry to say it was almost a complete failure on account of the drought.
104. Are you in a position to say, supposing the season had been favourable, and the usual rainfall had occurred as in years past, that the rice crop would then have been successful? Yes.
105. Do you think that the growing of rice in this district has gone beyond the experimental stage? Yes.
106. *By Mr. King*: What is the average yield of rice per acre? The only time it was largely grown was last year.
107. What do you consider a fair average? Well, take one year with another, at least one ton of dressed rice per acre.
108. What price can be got for that rice? £3 10s. on the ground for undressed rice or paddy.
109. Would there not be more than one ton of paddy to the acre? The average would be about 25 cwt. or 30 cwt. of paddy. I have known one particular patch of seven acres which yielded 2½ tons of paddy to the acre.
110. How many crops of rice can be taken in a year? Only one. Alternate crops can be grown on the same ground.
111. *By the Chairman*: Do you get any frosts in this district? No.
112. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is rice straw at all a commercial article for forage? Yes.
113. Is it sold up here in any quantity? We have sold it in a small way as chaff.
114. Then farmers look upon it as a source of revenue in addition to the rice itself? Yes.
115. Have you grown any yourself? No; excepting that, as I have said before, the Chinese on my selection do so.
116. Is there any machinery in the district for cleaning rice? I have one myself.
117. Is it a huller? Yes; a huller, a separator, and polisher.
118. Do you hull and clean rice for people? No; the machine is only a small one, and I only dress what I have bought from Chinamen.
119. Is there any one in the district who would dress rice for the farmers and growers if they had no mills of their own? I would dress it for them myself if they chose to send it. All the Chinese have mills of their own.
120. *By the Chairman*: Have any Europeans tried to grow rice in this district? No; I think not. If they have done so it is on a very small scale.

121. Are there any Europeans cultivating their land themselves in this district? Very few.

122. Can you give any reason why they do not cultivate more? Yes. Labour is too scarce, dear, uncertain, and unsuitable. We can't get the proper class of labour.

123. Have they tried to get the proper class of labour? Yes.

124. Have the farmers tried to cultivate their farms with what you call the proper labour? How do you mean.

125. With the only available labour? Yes, certainly; I have myself for one.

126. We gather from your evidence that the bulk of the farms in this district are under cultivation by Chinamen. What I desire to elicit from you, if I can, is the reason why the Europeans do not cultivate the land here? For the reason I have just given you.

127. Why does it occur? The cost of labour is too great. The majority of those who settle on the land have not much money to spare; it takes them about £10 an acre to make the land ready before they can get a crop in, and that means a considerable expense to start with. A farmer instead of laying out £300 or £400, which he cannot spare even if he has it, can get a number of Chinamen to lease the ground from him for three or four years, during which time they clear it, and then hand it over to him ready for the plough. That is the reason why the land is at present in the hands of Chinamen; and although the land is now in the hands of Chinamen, I do not think there will be many Chinese here in two years' time.

128. Then are the farms on the Daintree River—the scrub lands along its banks—selected with the view of being let to Chinamen under the terms just named? When the lands were selected there was nothing known or thought of with regard to letting them to Chinamen. That is a matter of comparatively recent date. Everyone wanted to utilise his own land himself—I myself, in common with others; but sugar fell in value, and to cap all, Griffith put a set on the black labour question and frightened the people from the district. There would have been several mills in the district to crush the cane for the small farmers had it not been for the black labour scare. I know of one Melbourne syndicate that would have put a mill on the Mossman at the time that the general election put Griffith in, and the black labour scare frightened them away. At that time sugar had not fallen much in value, so it was simply the labour question that frightened them off.

129. By Mr. Cowley: What do Chinese pay for cleared land to the landlord? That I cannot say from my own knowledge. I believe that in one or two instances the landlord obtains as much as 30s. an acre for only cleared scrub. The Chinese won't have the land at a gift after three or four years.

130. Did farming pay you during the eight years you were engaged in it? Certainly not; I lost every penny I had.

131. By Mr. King: Even when you employed kanaka labour to work it? All that time I was only developing the land, and even with kanaka labour it would not pay. When the time came that I had to pay £1 to £1 5s. a week and rations it was too dear. Labour is much dearer here than you can get in the South.

132. What did you grow principally yourself? Maize; and I planted fruit trees.

133. By Mr. Cowley: Were you offered a Government central mill here? Yes, a central mill was recommended by Mr. Hodgkinson.

134. Why did you decline it? Because we could not comply with the conditions.

135. What particular condition? The condition that we objected to was that we must not employ anything but European labour in cultivating and crushing sugar.

136. Was that the sole reason for your declining the offer? Yes.

137. You had no objection to mortgage your land to the Government; the labour question was the only reason for your objecting? Yes. I would have mortgaged my land to the Government but for the labour clause in the agreement, and as proposed I knew the scheme would be a failure and I did not want to mortgage myself to the Government when I knew in my own mind that it would be a failure.

138. By the Chairman: Are you able to say from your own knowledge of the character of the soil whether tea, coffee, or tobacco could be grown here? Yes.

139. By Mr. King: Has any attempt been made to do so? Yes; coffee could not be a better success. It has not been grown except in an experimental way.

140. What do you mean by in an experimental way? Has there been a quarter or half-an-acre planted with coffee? Yes, about half-an-acre was grown on the Mossman by Dan Hart, and without any care the trees are now perfectly healthy and laden with berries.

141. By Mr. Cowley: Does he pick it and clean it and prepare it for market? Yes.

142. By Mr. King: Has an attempt been made to grow tobacco? Yes, but it was only as an experiment.

143. Does it grow well? Yes; in some kinds of soil. I have it at my place, and it grows all over the place like a weed.

144. As a produce merchant, you have had something to do with exporting fruit? Yes.

145. Are the arrangements satisfactory? No; very unsatisfactory.

146. Explain what the growers have found fault with in the present arrangements? The shipping arrangement is the difficulty. There is no accommodation whatever for fruit carrying, the same as there is in the Fiji boats; and in addition to that, Mr. Walsh, who is the agent for the company, writes across every shipping receipt a notification that they are not responsible for ulage, which is simply an inducement to the crew to pilfer. This is a great innovation. It was bad enough before, but in one instance last year I sent forty-five cases of mangoes to Brisbane and thirteen arrived completely empty, and half of the remainder were more or less damaged.

147. By the Chairman: Did you appeal for redress? No, I did not; because I thought it was more bother than it was worth to follow it up.

148. By Mr. King: Is there any great loss on those shipments—For instance, you send to an agent, and when you get in account sales do you find that there are any reductions made on account of unsaleable fruit? There are very heavy losses. I had a communication this week, and find that I have lost about £30 in fruit. That was the total loss on two shipments. Want of care in transhipment is the great difficulty we have to contend with.

149. By Mr. Cowley: Where was the fruit shipped to? To Sydney and Brisbane.

150. Is that simply bananas, or other fruit? Bananas and mangoes.

151. Were

R. O. Jones.

10 Jan., 1889.

- R. O. Jones.
10 Jan., 1889.
151. Were the bananas sent loose in bunches? Yes; and they left here in splendid order.
152. Were the mangoes packed in cases? Yes; all carefully packed. The shipment I suffered most from was sent by the s.s. "Cintra."
153. Was the loss through the fruit decaying, or bad handling? It was through the fruit decaying.
154. Is there any suggestion for remedying this? Yes.
155. Quicker boats? Yes.
156. Is it the length of the trip that causes so much loss in shipments of fruit? Yes; but also the want of special accommodation for fruit. Instead of bananas being packed up as high as this room on top of one another, they ought to be put in layers, with battens between them, so as to prevent the weight of those on top destroying those underneath.
157. If there were specially fitted-up boats—fast-sailing boats—would that be a great inducement to growers to extend operations? Yes. I think mangoes and bananas would be more cultivated, and would be sent to Sydney.
158. In packing mangoes, do you put paper round them or simply place them in a case? I think it is a mistake to put paper round them. I have done so myself.
159. How did they do—did they carry better or worse? Well, they carried right enough. I do not put paper round, because it must do harm by excluding the air.
160. *By Mr. King*: Are there any oranges, lemons, or limes grown in this district in any quantity? Yes.
161. Are they grown in quantities for export? Yes.
162. Do they grow well? They grow well the first few years; but I do not think they will be a permanent success, especially the orange, as there is so much disease.
163. Do lemons or limes do any better? Limes do well; but the lemons are subject to disease, and languish.
164. *By the Chairman*: What kind of disease? I am not versed in the different diseases. It attacks the bark of the tree; and there are borers and grubs that attack the roots of the trees, and moths that destroy the fruit, and a leaf disease.
165. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you any experience in orange growing yourself? Yes.
166. Were the orange trees seedlings or grafted? Both. I have put in trees which were seedlings, and I have planted seedlings myself.
167. Which do you find have done best? The seedlings.
168. Were the worked trees on lemon stocks or orange stocks? I can't say for certain; I believe they were lemon stocks, because lemon stocks were thought better to graft on. The orange stocks only came to be acted on lately.
169. Is the seedling tree more or less susceptible to blight than the worked tree? It is less susceptible than the grafted tree, but they are both open to about twelve different diseases, more especially the grafted tree.
170. How long do the seedlings take before they bear? They bear a little about the fourth year, but not much.
171. Do the worked trees bear earlier? Yes; they have fruit in the third year.
172. What is the character of the soil on which your orange trees are grown—speaking from your own knowledge? They were always grown on scrub soil.
173. What is the nature of the subsoil? Clayey.
174. *By Mr. King*: How deep is the clay from the surface? The roots do not get into the subsoil on scrubland.
175. How deep is it? It is from six to fifteen feet before you come to the subsoil; all scrub soil is in itself clayey.
176. Is there any market for oranges, lemons, and limes? No local market.
177. Does it pay to send them away? Yes; if they are properly treated they pay very well, because the fruit comes on before the Sydney and Brisbane fruit, and is much superior.
178. Is there any establishment here for the preserving of fruit? Yes; Mr. Stewart has one on the Daintree, and there are two others.
179. Has anyone in the district purchased a Spohn's Evaporator? Yes; Welshman, on the Daintree, has one. He has a fruit dryer, and I think it is a Spohn's.
180. Some time ago you were speaking about leasing land to Chinamen. Have you ever tried leasing it to white men instead of to Chinamen? Yes.
181. Did any white men lease it from you? No; none.
182. Is it cleared land? Yes.
183. Is there any place where white men could lease land, and are there any facilities offered them for doing so? Yes.
184. If they would do so would the landlord give it to them? Certainly. The land I refer to is cleared land for which Chinamen were giving 80s. an acre. There is a freehold farm on the Mossman, known as Thompson's farm. It is well situated, and has forty or fifty acres cleared. It was offered to the public, and no one would take it at a gift for twelve months.
185. *By the Chairman*: How do you account for that? I think I have accounted for it before. The labour is too scarce and dear.
186. Have you any practical suggestions to offer to the Commission by which the growth of tropical fruit could be increased in Port Douglas? Yes, I think so.
187. Will you kindly do so? First, by the Government assisting us by pointing out to us by experiment—by means of experimental farms—what are the kinds of fruit and other tropical crops most suitable for the various soils and situations. This has been described by Mr. McLean just recently.
188. *By Mr. Cowley*: Then if an experimental farm was run in this district by the Government would the farmers visit it and avail themselves of the information? Yes. It could be made self-supporting or nearly so after a time. It could be something on an humble scale at first.
189. *By Mr. King*: Do you know the various settlers up here? Yes.
190. Have you known many of the settlers who have gone out in the district round about here? Yes.
191. Does the climate affect their health? No. The health of the district is good; nothing to complain of.

192. Is there any fever amongst the settlers? Not now. Originally fever was prevalent the same as in R. O. Jones. every new settlement; but as settlement and clearing goes on the fever seems to die away.
193. Have the settlers been troubled by the blacks at all? Yes, very much. It is one of the principal 10 Jan., 1889. obstacles now in the way of settlement.
194. The depredations of the blacks are a serious hindrance, then? Yes; to the outside settlement. I suffered very heavily myself when I first went amongst them.
195. What do they generally take;—a few rations or a little corn or anything they can get at all? They take everything they can lay their hands on. My next door neighbour was killed about three years ago by them.
196. But do their thefts amount to anything serious? They killed seventeen cows and three horses in one night for me, and they repeat the operation periodically.
197. *By the Chairman*: Do you think from your knowledge of the dangerous character of the aboriginal blacks, that it prejudices the people from settling here? It is the knowledge of the countenance given to the blacks by the Government, the want of protection to the whites, and the stringent rules against white men avenging themselves that prevents settlement.
198. Where are they located in this district? We have now some blackfellows—aboriginals—on the Saltwater Creek, between the Mossman and the Daintree.
199. Has any effort been made to employ the aboriginal natives, excepting in the towns? Have any of the settlers employed them? No; I think not. It is only recently that they have come in at all. Some of them are employed at Bloomfield, and they are employed on a small scale by white settlers on the other side of Saltwater Creek.
200. Do you know if they do their work fairly well? I believe not.
201. When they committed those depredations, did it arise out of pure devilment, or from a want of food? In some instances, want of food, no doubt. But I do not think the blacks would kill seventeen bullocks and three horses for food; there must have been some devilment in that.
202. If those blacks had a reserve where they could always get rations, would they commit those depredations? Yes; I think they would even do it then. My experience is that the better they are treated the worse return they give.
203. Can you tell us anything about the rainfall in this district? It is one of the heaviest in the colony.
204. How is it distributed? Take it as a general average you won't see less than six weeks without rain throughout the year.
205. Is it injurious to the farming operations here? No.
206. Then the seasons are suitable, as a rule, for agricultural work? Yes; the rainfall is about the best in the colony.
207. *By Mr. King*: Is there much scrub land still unsettled? Yes; some rough country.
208. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is there any water communication to this scrub land? No deep water communication.
209. *By the Chairman*: Are the whole of the scrub lands on the Daintree selected? Yes; all the best portions.
210. On the lands open for selection now would the blacks be dangerous? Well, if not dangerous, they would be annoying. I am speaking now of the more secluded selections.
211. Would you recommend it as suitable for selection by newly-arrived emigrants? No; the blacks would steal rations from them; that has been the means of depopulating the Daintree.
212. Have you made any representations to the Government about it? Yes; to the Police Department, chiefly.
213. Have any steps been taken to afford protection? No; very little. On one occasion I wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Police. I was then living by myself and wrote about the blacks stealing my cattle, and asked for protection. The Commissioner replied and said that if we outside settlers wanted police protection we could not get it, and would have to do the best we could to protect ourselves. Now the Government say, "you must not protect yourselves; we will protect you." So you will see that we have fallen between two stools.
214. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do the aboriginals make any raids on Chinamen? No; not very much.
215. *By the Chairman*: Beyond the suggestion of the establishment of an experimental farm where tropical fruits can be grown, have you any other to offer us? We want more effective police protection, or more liberty to deal with the blacks ourselves. We want cheap and reliable labour, and to be put on the same footing in that respect as other tropical countries. If we have to go into the open market for European labour and pay 200 or 300 per cent. more for it than coloured labour it simply means shutting us up. It simply means locking the northern lands up altogether, or allowing coloured labour.
216. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you tried to grow cocoanut, cinchona, indiarubber tree, nutmeg, tobacco, or cocoa? I tried cocoa, but it died with me. There are two or three trees in the district. There are plenty of cocoanut trees bearing in the district.
217. Have the cocoanuts been grown for export? I think Dan Hart sent a few away.
218. Has nutmeg been grown or attempted to be grown here? I believe it is growing, but do not know for certain.
219. Does it not grow wild in the scrub? Yes; but it is not the nutmeg of commerce, but is a good substitute for it.
220. Has any attempt been made to grow cayenne pepper in the district? Yes; I can show you some on my place on the Daintree.
221. Has it been grown for export or as an experiment only? As an experiment only.
222. From your own knowledge of small farms, could many of these things be grown if you had reliable labour and better means for getting the work done? I think we could grow almost any tropical plant.
223. Do you, yourself, as a farmer, take in any periodical on farming, such as the *Planter and Farmer*, *The Queenslander*, &c.? I have the *Planter and Farmer*, *The Queenslander*, and the local papers.
224. *By the Chairman*: If an agricultural lecturer went through the district and explained the different articles and the mode of treatment, and worked in conjunction with the experimental farm, would that be a benefit to the farmers? A lecture without practical demonstration would be of very little value. There are few farmers who can retain much of a lecture in their heads.

- R. O. Jones. 225. But supposing the Government appointed a lecturer in connection with the experimental farm, as has been suggested, how would that act? It would have great value in itself; but what would be of much more value would be to have a clear demonstration of what could be done practically. You can get any amount of information in books, but it is difficult to carry it into effect.
- 10 Jan., 1889. 226. Have you a farmers' association in the district where you meet and read papers and discuss subjects? No; we are too much disorganised, and too scattered.
227. Have you tried to have an exhibition of produce in your district, so as to induce farmers to take an interest in the district, and compete against each other? No; the nearest is Townsville.
228. If the farmers, whom you say are very much scattered in this district, were to form a farmers' union, on the basis of farmers' unions in other parts of the colony, at which a great many of the subjects mentioned to-night could be discussed, and practical good result from it—would not that be beneficial? Yes; that is a thing that will be established in the course of time. At present the population being so scattered they cannot afford to go to any central meeting place.
229. Do you not think that if the farmers were to spend a day occasionally in this way it would be money and time well spent for their protection and the conservation of their own interests? Yes. In a sparsely populated district it is very difficult to put such an institution into working order. This district extends over an area of thirty miles.

WEDNESDAY, 11 JANUARY, 1889.

(At Port Douglas.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

DANIEL HART, called and examined:

- Daniel Hart. 230. *By the Chairman*: What is your name? Daniel Hart.
- 11 Jan., 1889. 231. Are you a selector in this district? Yes.
232. What part? The Mossman.
233. How long have you been there? Since August, 1874.
234. What is the area of your selection? 150 acres.
235. Is it a homestead selection? Yes.
236. Are you thoroughly acquainted with the Mossman district? Yes; from the Johnstone up. I have explored all the country, and know all the selectors.
237. Do you know what they are producing? Yes.
238. In what condition financially are the selectors generally? For those who have Chinaman employed on their ground it is only an existence. It is very bad on the Mossman.
239. *By Mr. King*: Are the selectors hard up? Yes, very hard up. I am looking every day to be driven off my selection by the bank. I owe the bank money and can't pay it.
240. *By the Chairman*: Owing to the interest you have to pay? Yes.
241. What do you produce on your selection? I have tried everything that you can mention; my selection is more of an experimental farm than anything else. I am still trying. I grew maize first, before the Chinamen came. It used to pay first-rate, as we got 10s. a bushel.
242. Will you describe the various things that you have experimented on on your selection? I have tried cane principally after the corn failed, and we grew some of the finest cane in the colony. But that was a failure, so we had to dig it up as we could not make it a financial success with the labour at our disposal.
243. What area of land have you under cultivation? The garden is from nine to ten acres in extent, planted with trees.
244. Was sugar-cane grown on those nine or ten acres? It was distributed all over the ten acres before I planted trees.
245. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did you never cultivate more than ten acres? No.
246. When you grew sugar-cane who did you sell it to? I supplied the plantations at Cairns and the Bloomfield when they required it.
247. Then you simply grew plants? Yes.
248. Did you sell the sugar-cane for crushing? No.
249. What was the yield per acre? Did you sell by the ton or by the 1,000? I sold by the 1,000.
250. What price did you get per 1,000? 30s.
251. What paid you well? Oh, yes; it paid me well.
252. But you never grew anything for the mill? Yes, I grew for the mill, but there was no mill to send it to.
253. *By Mr. King*: Have you leased any of your land to Chinamen? No, sir; and I hope I never will.
254. *By the Chairman*: Then your ten acres is an experimental orchard, and you used to supply the people with trees and plants? Yes; nearly all the fruit trees in the district, except those on Mr. Montgomerie's farm, came from my orchard.

255. Could

Daniel Hart.

11 Jan., 1889.

255. Could you particularise the fruit? Yes.

256. How many orange trees have you? Between 300 and 400.

257. Do they bear? Yes, but I have been neglecting them, because I can't get any money for my fruit.

258. What do you mean by that? Well, I mean that if I only get £10 for a big shipment to Brisbane, I think it is time to give it up. I sent 200 cases to one person in Brisbane and only got £10 in return, as the proceeds of the whole transaction.

259. That is after paying all expenses? Yes.

260. What is the freight from Port Douglas to Brisbane? I can't tell you exactly, as it is in my book at home.

261. What is the cause of this low price? There were no complaints as to the quality of the oranges. Of the first forty boxes I sent down, the persons I sent them to wrote a letter to say that twelve cases out of the forty were empty.

262. After getting such poor returns, you sent no more oranges to Brisbane? No; I would not take the trouble. I had a man all last season doing nothing but making cases.

263. Do you ship oranges to Normanton? Yes.

264. With what result? One man took £30 worth of oranges. I sent in my account to him and he sent back £10, and when I sent for the balance he cleared out and left the district.

265. By Mr. Cowley: Then those oranges were purchased by the man? Yes.

266. Do you send to any other port? Yes, Rockhampton.

267. With what result? Very good, indeed. They netted me 7s. a case after paying all my expenses. The purchaser would have taken more, but the Rockhampton fruit came in just at the time, so he wrote to me to send no more.

268. When you sent fruit to Rockhampton and Normanton, has there been any complaint about ullage, or the fruit arriving in bad condition? No complaint at all, and all would have been right if I had got my money from Normanton.

269. Do you still grow oranges? The trees are still there, but I am neglecting them, because it does not pay me to trouble with them. You will see some of the finest trees in the district on my farm. I got all the plants from Sydney.

270. How many oranges do you send away in a case? Seven dozen in a fruit case.

271. If you can get 7s. a case you would get good value? Of course I would, if I could always get it. If I could make 6s. a case it would pay.

272. What would pay you for a case of seven dozen? Well, 6s., including the case; that is after paying for the case. Seven shillings, after paying all expenses, would pay me.

273. By Mr. King: What else have you besides orange trees? Mangoes.

274. How many? Three or four dozen trees.

275. By the Chairman: Do they produce fruit very prolifically? Yes.

276. Have you tried to do anything with them? I have been trying vinegar this year. They will make good vinegar. I believe they would make wine.

277. By Mr. King: Have you sent any away? I sent some to Brisbane to a friend of mine, and he sold them very well—at 1s. per doz. I can send mangoes to Sydney and Rockhampton, and all intervening ports. But I do not like the mango as a crop at all. The quantity there is now is a risk. People in Brisbane only take one, two, or three cases chiefly for their own use. I have orders for some to go to Townsville, and have been waiting for two or three boats to send them away. Mangoes must be packed very carefully, even to send to Townsville. Mangoes ferment just the same as saccharine matter in sugar in making rum. I have been experimenting, and believe they would make a beautiful spirit.

278. By Mr. Cowley: Have you attempted to make chutney and the preserving of mangoes for market? No; we only make a little chutney for our own use.

279. Were the orange trees seedlings or worked trees? I have some of both. I have more worked trees than seedlings.

280. Which do you find the best? The seedlings.

281. Are they much longer in maturing? Yes; but take it altogether they are the best. The worked tree is from three to four years old when we get them, and bear three years after planting them, while the seedling only takes five years altogether to bear.

282. Do the seedlings bear larger and better fruit? Sparsely at first, but well the second year.

283. Does the aphid and blight attack many trees? Yes.

284. What remedy do you use? I have a large syringe which I fill with kerosene, and with which I cleanse the trees, and the insect dies. The kerosene does not kill the tree.

285. Do you suffer much from the orange blight or aphid? I do; and kill it with kerosene.

286. How do you do it? It is a solution mixed with soft soap, with which I syringe the trees. If I have not time to do that, I take a bucket of dry ash and sprinkle it over the affected part. It only comes on the young wood.

287. How old are your trees? Some are thirteen years old. They were seedlings.

288. Are they showing signs of decay. No; a few show signs of wearing, but the others are all right; they stand very well.

289. What is the character of the soil? It is loam or scrub land. It runs down about four feet, and below there is a nice sandy sub-soil.

290. Have you any clay underneath? Yes; but it is a long way down.

291. Do your orange trees grow well, and bear good average crops? Yes; there is another thing I would like to say in regard to the skin disease; the bark seems to commence rotting, and the use of lime is the remedy. I paint it with a brush, and go as far up the tree as possible; that keeps it clean from the scale. Last year I had two or three trees very bad with it, in fact I thought one was dead; but I got the lime and washed them, and now they are all right and bearing fruit.

292. Do you only do that when you see signs of the disease? At present; but if I had time I would whitewash every tree in the garden.

293. By the Chairman: Is lime-washing a preventative against scale? A preventative against all bark diseases.

- Daniel Hart. 294. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did you say that you got your cases made in the district? Yes; they cost me 1s. 3d. a case.
- 11 Jan., 1889. 295. How much will a case hold? Seven dozen.
296. *By the Chairman*: What other trees have you? I have tried cinnamon and coffee.
297. What success had you with the cinnamon? I believe it is the finest tree I ever saw growing.
298. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you prepared any for the market? No.
299. Did you prepare any at all? Yes; I sent some to Baron von Mueller in Melbourne, and he was very highly pleased with it.
300. Have you sold any? No; it takes labour to look after it.
301. How many trees have you? Only one.
302. Are you satisfied that the tree will grow well? There is nothing to beat it.
303. How long does it take from the planting before you can strip the bark? Well, I do not know. I never had much to do with cinnamon, but I believe you can strip it in four years.
304. What do you mean by saying "If I had labour"? I mean that I would require cheap labour.
305. What do you call cheap labour? You could not have anything dearer than 6s. a week and find themselves.
306. Could a man with a family of children be able to do this—it is not laborious work? Yes; neither coffee nor cinnamon requires laborious work. Children could do the work well, and it would come in as an auxiliary in a place if a few of these trees were growing.
307. How much land have you under coffee? Not much. I only tried it here and there to see whether it did well. I have some dozen trees near the house, and they bear well. I have tried some away from the house where it is not so shady, and they have done very well.
308. *By Mr. King*: How much land have you planted with coffee trees? A quarter of an acre.
309. What weight of coffee do you get off that quarter of an acre? An average of about 4 lbs. of coffee off each tree.
310. *By Mr. Cowley*: Not clean coffee? Yes.
311. How old are those trees? The oldest is 12½ years only.
312. How long does it take for the tree to mature if you plant from the nursery, twelve months after putting in the seed? Three years.
313. How much will you get per tree the first year? Half-a-pound per tree.
314. The young trees gradually increase until they become full bearing? Yes.
315. When does a tree arrive at its maximum? In six years from planting, and from them then I average 4 lbs. per tree.
316. Have you sold any of the coffee? Yes; I have prepared it and sold it in this town for 3s. per lb.
317. Is that in the bean? Ground, but without chicory. I could have sold more than I produced.
318. That will pay handsomely? Yes.
319. How have you not gone in for coffee growing? Because of want of labour. If we had cheap labour I would grow plenty of it.
320. Do those trees want much pruning? In this part of the country they ought to be pruned once a year, and the suckers that come up from the bottom ought to be taken off every week.
321. Is once a year enough for pruning? Certainly, after taking off the crop.
322. Does this coffee ripen gradually and all at once, or over long periods and not all at once? It is ripening for two months. It is two months between the ripening of the first berries and the last.
323. How may pickings do you have in a year? Three pickings.
324. What class of labour would be suitable for growing coffee? How much could you pay those labourers a year, finding them in rations? I could pay £12 a year and rations to labourers for coffee-growing.
325. Do you think that there is much land in the district that is suitable for coffee-growing? I never saw any place in all my travels more suitable for coffee and tea than the ranges here.
326. *By the Chairman*: You have spent a long time in Jamaica, have you not? Yes.
327. *By Mr. Cowley*: At what season of the year does coffee ripen? In August principally.
328. Is that the dry season? Yes.
329. Is it a favourable season for picking? Yes.
330. Have you any machinery for preparing the coffee for market? No. I do everything with my own fingers, and with a mortar and mill to grind roast coffee.
331. What labour have you used? My own labour and kanakas. I also had some aboriginal natives working for me.
332. How did the aboriginals work? I was never so well pleased as when I had a few aboriginals working for me.
333. What do you pay those men? Nothing;—simply give them tucker, tobacco, and old clothes.
334. Do you consider them well worthy of what you paid them? They were worth more; they were worth wages.
335. Are there many of these men available? They can be made available by getting one or two in and treating them kindly, and letting them go when they like. You must not restrict them, but give them full liberty to go and come as they please. When they go they tell others if they have been well treated, and more are then willing to come and work. If you clothe and feed them well, I believe they would never leave you. I have often asked the Commissioner here for a bag of flour to help me to feed them with, and he would not do it, and the natives went away. People, I find, give the natives a worse character than they deserve.
336. Have you suffered from the depredations of the blacks? I have never suffered any harm from them. I have always treated them kindly, and given them employment, if they were willing to work.
337. *By the Chairman*: Did those who worked for you—did they ever prove treacherous to you? No. I never allowed them in the house, but gave them a humpy to themselves.
338. You found that by being kind to them and giving them any little things that they asked for in the shape of tobacco and clothes, they were ready to give you work, and were sensible of your kindness? Yes; and to make it more so, I would almost go so far as to give them 2s. a week.

Daniel Hart.

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339. *By Mr. Cowley*: Then if you could get an aboriginal to work you would not only give him tobacco, clothes, and rations, but wages besides? Yes.
340. What class of work do they do? Corn hoeing and chipping.
341. Do they hoe coffee for you? No.
342. Have you used kanaka labour? Yes; but it is very expensive when you have to give 10s. a week for a time-expired man, and they often get as much as 12s. a week and £1 a week and board.
343. Were they under agreement to you? No; they would not enter into an agreement, and did just as they liked.
344. Was that on account of the abundance of employment and the demand for them? Yes.
345. Have you ever applied to have any indented to you? I did at first, and got eight the first time I settled here. For the first three months they worked very middlingly, and I had a lot of trouble with them, but after that they got on first-rate, and were just beginning to get into settled work, and I had no trouble with them. They stopped with me twelve months, and then the partner who was with me got into trouble, and the kanakas were on his schedule, and they were taken away from me, and I lost the kanakas. They were serviceable, tractable, and did good work.
346. What did you pay them for wages? £6 a year and tucker.
347. What did their passage-money cost? It was cheaper then than now.
348. What did it cost you to introduce them? I could not say exactly. Mr. Allan Gray, who was my friend, conducted all that business for me.
349. If you could get labour of that description, could you grow coffee and make it pay? Yes.
350. Have you employed any Chinese? Yes, I have.
351. How did they turn out? Very badly. They work well for themselves and do a great amount of work, but they will not do so for an employer.
352. How did you employ them? By the week. They were never satisfactory.
353. What wages did you pay them? 15s. and £1 a week and food.
354. Did they do as much as a kanaka? They would not do as much, they would only do a certain quantity of work each day.
355. *By the Chairman*: Has anyone else in the district grown coffee? Yes, but not the coffee that I grew. I grew Arabian coffee, and they tried Liberian coffee.
356. Of the two descriptions which is the best adapted for this district? The Arabian.
357. *By Mr. Cowley*: In what respect does the Liberian coffee fail? Because it does not bear anything like the other coffee—has not so heavy a crop. I can't exactly explain the difference, but the milling and cleaning of it is very difficult, and it has a very thick cherry and even when you dry it with the cherry on, it is terrible. But the other coffee does well.
358. Does the Liberian coffee take as much pruning as the other? I never prune any.
359. *By the Chairman*: Have you ever tried rice growing? I was the first to try it here. I had two kinds—mountain and swamp rice—and both did well.
360. Was this an experiment? Yes.
361. Did you know of anyone in the district who has tried swamp or hill rice? No one, but Chinameu.
362. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did they cultivate it for their own consumption only? No; they sold it to Europeans. A party came from Cairns, up here, to purchase rice.
363. Is there any market for paddy? Yes.
364. What did they offer for it? I do not know.
365. The party from Cairns did not tell you what he was prepared to pay? No.
366. Do you know about how much the yield of rice is per acre here? No.
367. Have you grown any arrowroot for market? I grew West Indian arrowroot. It is a small plant. In the West Indies we cut it for chaff. We use it for nothing else.
368. Have you grown and manufactured any for market? Yes.
369. What yield per acre did you get? I planted about half-a-chain of tubers and took it up last season and got off the half-ton about 500 lbs. of arrowroot. That would have paid me nicely if I had had consumption for it.
370. *By the Chairman*: Is there any demand for it? Yes; women about here (Port Douglas) gave me 1s. per lb. for it. I went into the store and asked the storeman what he would give me for 200 lbs. or 300 lbs of arrowroot, and he said, "We can get it from Lehey for 4d., and we can't afford to give you any more."
371. *By Mr. Cowley*: Would 4d. per lb. pay? No.
372. What would pay? I can't say. If we had labourers working for nothing it would not pay. We must have machinery and grow it on a large scale. Even then it would not pay. I sent some to the London Exhibition, and also to the Melbourne Exhibition.
373. *By the Chairman*: Have you tried growing tobacco? Yes.
374. How have you succeeded? Very well.
375. Is the district capable of growing tobacco? Yes.
376. Why is it not cultivated? On account of the labour.
377. Did you ever try to obtain the value of the tobacco leaf grown by you when dried? I never sold any dry tobacco leaf. People who are acquainted with tobacco say they could not get a better leaf than I now have.
378. Does cocoa grow here? Yes; I sent to the Acclimatisation Society for some plants, and got twenty cocoa plants, but they were so old and pot-bound that only three have done well. I am trying to get some more.
379. Have you tried limes or lemons? Yes; both the common lemon and the Lisbon lemon.
380. What success did you meet with in growing them? They grew well.
381. Have you a market for lemons? No. I sent some away last season. A friend of mine—Mr. Harvey, of Melbourne—recommended me to send some there, and I sent ten cases, and they brought in a return averaging about 5s. 6d. a case.
382. Did that include freight and expenses? No; clear of everything.
383. How many were there in a case? Nine dozen.
384. Then you are quite satisfied with the experiment you made in growing lemons and limes, and are sure they will succeed? Yes.
385. Have

- Daniel Hart. 385. Have you tried citrons? Yes.
386. And were they a success? A great success since Messrs. Russell and Co. started their factory in Brisbane, and as they dealt with me I make a profit out of the citrons.
- 11 Jan., 1889. 387. *By Mr. Cowley*: What price does the firm give you per doz.? They give me about 30s. for a porter case full of citrons free on board here.
388. How many would that case hold? About eight or nine dozen.
389. Is there much demand for that class of fruit, or is it limited? There is only Russell and Co. in the market.
390. What quantity would they take? They would take two cases every week.
391. How many cases have you supplied altogether? Seven or eight cases altogether.
392. Then when Russell and Co. were burnt out the demand ceased? Yes; but I will send to them again.
393. Does not citron culture require very little labour? Very little. It grows like a weed and all you have to do is to prune it.
394. Are there any other articles of tropical agriculture or fruit that you grow? Yes; Chinese fruits—the lungung.
395. *By the Chairman*: With regard to this fruit, is there much of it? I have one tree, and the fruit is sold to the Chinamen every year before it is ripe.
396. What is the money yield? It averages about £3 a tree.
397. How many trees could you grow to the acre? These grow bigger than oranges. They could be planted thirty feet apart. I should think forty or fifty trees to the acre.
398. *By Mr. Cowley*: How long did it take this tree to bear? Planted from the graft it will not take more than three years, but from a seed it would take six years. Mine was sent to me in a pot by the Acclimatisation Society.
399. Have you succeeded with any more sorts? No; I have a lot of suckers from the trees, ready to plant and send away.
400. Amongst any of those trees that you have, have you tried the Japanese system, called “gooté,” by which you strip off a small ring of bark and cover the wound up with a ball of earth till the young roots commence growing? No.
401. *By the Chairman*: You have a thorough knowledge of the Mossman River generally? Yes; I am well acquainted with the majority of the settlers on the river.
402. What is the average area of the selections? 160 acres, 600 acres, 1,280 acres, 650 acres, and 600 acres. I know these.
403. Are these conditional selections? Some are homesteads, and others conditional selections.
404. Have the original selectors resided themselves on their selections, or done so by bailiff? By bailiff, principally. Pringle resides on his selection. Jones and Johnston work their own selections. They are all paid up now.
405. Are all these selections made freehold now? Yes.
406. Do they work them now or lease them to Chinamen? Jones, Pringle, and Wilson do, and a portion of Bribri is leased to Chinamen, also some portion of Macmahon's. In fact they are all more or less leased to Chinamen.
407. Then in point of fact none of the original selectors are working the land themselves? None of them.
408. What is the general condition of the health of the Europeans on the Mossman River? When we first came here it was very bad. Since the Mossman was cleared I believe it is very healthy—as healthy a place as there is in the colony. It is very healthy now.
409. Is there any quantity of land open for selection on the Mossman? Yes; this coffee land that I spoke of, and land at Cassowary Creek. That is offered for village settlement. It is grand land, but I am afraid it will never be settled on.
410. Are you of opinion that if there was an experimental farm here for the growth of articles of commercial value, which selectors could see growing, and their mode of cultivation, with the view of introducing them into their own selections, it would assist tropical agriculture in this district? No, because we have already tried everything here. Every man since he came here—and some have been here a long time—has been trying to find out what tropical plants and fruits would do here. There is Mr. Montgomerie, for instance;—you will be pleased to see his garden. I have tried everything, and I know exactly what will pay and what will not now. I am speaking, of course, for myself.
411. Part of the duty of the Commission is to receive suggestions from gentlemen like yourself with the view of promoting tropical agriculture in Port Douglas. Can you offer any suggestions by which tropical agriculture in this district can be assisted and promoted? No other than by cheap labour. We have tried everything.
412. Do you think that if the coastal steamers carrying fruit from here to the Southern ports or to Normanton took more care of the fruit than they do now, that it would be an assistance to you? It would be the greatest assistance to the fruit growers up here.
413. Would it also assist you to have trustworthy agents at the different ports to receive the products of this district? Yes; that is the thing.
414. Have you known any selectors besides yourselves who have sustained loss through defaulting agents? Yes; everybody is complaining of it.
415. Then I take it that these are two of the chief difficulties you have to contend against here—first, the loss byillage on the steamers; and second, defaulting agents at the various ports? Yes; I would not say defaulting agents, but defaulting purchasers.
416. And poor returns from consignees down South to whom you have sent your products? Yes.
417. *By Mr. Cowley*: The Bribri estate is a sugar plantation? It was; it is not now at work.
418. Is it closed? Yes.
419. Can you tell me the character of the land—is it good or indifferent? Those parts of the land where they put their cane in you could not wish for better.
420. Can you tell me the cause of the failure, if they had good land, good crushing machinery, and a good mill? The closing of the mill was owing to their getting men to manage the mill who did not know anything about it.
421. Who

421. Who owned it? The proprietress of the mill in the first place was Mrs. Parker, and she kued Daniel Hart. nothing about sugar.
422. What labour did they employ? White men and kanakas. White men for the horses and drays, 11 Jan., 1889.
423. Did they employ aborigines? One man named De Coures did, and he is satisfied with the labour. He does nothing except with the natives. He grows a lot of bananas, and is now growing corn, and all the labour being natives.
424. Are you well acquainted with his place? Yes; very well.
425. How much had he under cultivation? One hundred and sixty acres is the area of his selection.
426. How much is under cultivation? I could not say exactly.
427. Could you tell us about the number of aborigines he employs? Ten or twelve, and at other times only four. They come and go just as they like. He has one faithful boy, whom he sends to the mountains to bring in the other men when he wants them.
428. As you are well acquainted with the Mossman and Daintree Rivers, can you tell us the character of the soil back from those rivers and between them? All agricultural country.
429. Is the country suitable for close settlement? Yes.
430. What means of communication is there? Mostly water.
431. At present what means of communication are there between the Daintree and Mossman and Port Douglas? Simply boats. The "Aracoon" goes to the Daintree and Mossman.
432. Then the means of communication which the farmers have with Port Douglas is good, if they grew produce enough? Yes.
433. Are the bars very bad? The Daintree bar is not very bad, except during one month of the year. When it is blowing you have sometimes to stop inside for a day or two.
434. What is the price per ton, or per bunch, for bringing bananas from the Daintree to Port Douglas? I could not tell. They charge me 1s. for a porter case from the Mossman, besides wharfage.
435. What would it cost to put it on board the coasting steamer? It would cost 1s. a case to put it on board a steamer. It costs 1s. to bring it to town, and I have to pay 2s. 6d. if I want a dray to go to my place.
436. *By the Chairman*: What freight do they charge a bunch for bananas? I do not know; I never exported any.
437. *By Mr. Cowley*: What do they charge for carrying maize? It is, I believe, 10s. a ton for maize from the Mossman.
438. What is the distance? Seven miles.
439. *By the Chairman*: Are you acquainted with the selectors on the Daintree? Yes; one or two. I have often been to the Daintree, but not much to the selectors there.
440. Do you know anything about the Daintree selections? Yes; I was the first selector there.
441. Is the land all selected? Yes; all the available land. I mean that all the land available with river frontages is selected.
442. In whose hands is it? There are a few 160-acre homestead selections, but the principal portion is held by gentlemen in Brisbane, absentees, who never show the place.
443. Has the land been turned to any use? Yes.
444. How many Europeans are now living on the selections of the Daintree? There are Fisher, Stewart, and about three others on the whole Daintree. These are all homestead selectors.
445. Could the whole of this available land on the Daintree river which is in the hands of absentee proprietors be cultivated as well and as easily as yours? Yes; it is similar soil to my own. It is the best land that can be got.
446. *By Mr. Cowley*: What do the selectors there grow? Bananas.
447. What labour do they employ? They work the land themselves. Fisher employs labour, but he gets in one of his neighbours for a day or two or a week or two just as he requires him. Fisher has a few bananas.
448. Are there any kanakas or Chinese? Stewart has a kanaka or two.
449. Are the Chinese employed there? In some cases, where the selector has a small banana patch, but not as many as on the Mossman.
450. *By the Chairman*: For how many miles up the Daintree is the land selected on either side? I have been up about twenty miles, and it was selected all the way up.
451. And in all that distance are there only five selectors living on their selections? Yes.
452. Are the aboriginal natives at the present time particularly destructive to the selectors who are living on their land? The selectors complain more than they have any cause to.
453. Then you think the selectors are not particularly molested? I can't say. But I have been living there for thirteen years, and they have never molested me.
454. Are you of opinion that the Government ought to assist those aborigines, now that their land is taken from them, by giving them food and blankets? If the Government had done what I wanted and given them food, they would be all right.
455. *By Mr. Cowley*: If a reserve was established for aborigines, and a caretaker placed in charge who would give these men food when they had no work on the farms, would it be a success? Yes. That is what is done in Victoria. De Coures of ten has a large number come to his place, and has to give them food, and it is rather rough on him.
456. *By the Chairman*: What is the general cause of the failure of tropical agriculture in this district? In the first place, there being no local consumption; in the second place, because wherever you send fruit you can't get a price for it; and thirdly, we can't grow and compete with the Southern market because of the want of a cheap kind of labour—and the latter is the principal thing of all.
457. *By Mr. Cowley*: As a rule what price do you pay a white man? 30s. a week and tucker.

JOHN DORRENS JOHNSTONE, called in and examined:

458. *By the Chairman*: You are a selector on the Mossman River? Yes.
459. What is the area of your selection? 640 acres.

John Dorrens
Johnstone.

460. What 11 Jan., 1889.

John Dorrens
Johnstone.

11 Jan., 1889.

460. What area have you cultivated? I have none under cultivation now, but I had thirty acres under cultivation. But I am preparing to grow sugar.
461. How long have you been on the Mossman River? Five years.
462. What is the nature of your selection? It is a conditional purchase.
463. When you had land under cultivation what did you principally grow? Maize.
464. What was the yield per acre? I had none. It was a very wet season, and when it was ready for gathering, I had not a dry day and it got rotten. That was the end of my maize growing.
465. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did you only grow it one year? Yes.
466. How many acres had you under crop? Thirty acres.
467. *By the Chairman*: Did you employ any labour besides your own? Kanaka labour.
468. How many had you? Ten.
469. Were they indentured to yourself? They were transferred to me.
470. What did you pay them? £5 a year and their board, clothes and tobacco, under the Government regulations.
471. After the failure of your maize what did you do with them? I set them clearing land.
472. *By Mr. Cowley*: With what object? To grow sugar. My brother was talking of starting a sugar-mill on the Mossman, and I intended selling to him. He was to have started last month.
473. *By the Chairman*: Practically up to the present time you are not cultivating the land at all? No.
474. Have you the kanakas still with you? No; they left me about two years ago. I paid them off.
475. Do you intend growing sugar? Yes, I did intend to do so, and if my brother had made a commencement I would have done so. When he puts up his mill I will start sugar-growing.
476. *By Mr. Cowley*: Then it is conditional on the mill being started that you grow the sugar? Yes. When Mr. Hodgkinson was here making inquiries as to the establishment of a central mill, I took no active part in the matter, because my brother said he would start one.
477. Is your selection freehold? Yes; I have not received the deeds yet, but it is freehold.
478. There is then no longer any necessity for you to carry on this work to fulfil the conditions? None.
479. *By the Chairman*: Have you received your certificate for the fulfilment of the conditions? Yes, long ago; and for all the money being paid up.
480. Are you pretty well acquainted with the Mossman district generally? I am.
481. Is there much cultivation carried on in the Mossman? Very little except what the Chinamen does. I have none on my selection, or on my brother's.
482. What is the reason that Europeans do not cultivate the land? The labour required is too high in price. I have five kanaka boys now, and I pay four of them 12s. a week, and one £1 per week, and their rations.
483. *By Mr. Cowley*: What else besides rations do you give them? Nothing else. They were just working as servants with me.
484. Are these men employed in clearing scrub? Yes. That is what I have been doing those last two years.
485. *By the Chairman*: Then is the high cost of labour the only reason why Europeans do not cultivate their land? No; there is another thing. You can't get white men here to work. You might get them to work seven months out of the year. When the hot weather comes they cannot stand it, and you can't get men to work. I myself can't stand it, and I would not expect a man to do what I could not do myself. When the thermometer stands at 120 degrees a white man cannot work.
486. What is the reason why so much land on the Mossman is leased to Chinamen? A few selectors expect the sugar industry to revive again, and they are all preparing for it; and leasing it to Chinamen is one way of preparing the land for something better than is growing.
487. Have you leased any of your land to Chinamen? No.
488. *By Mr. Cowley*: I suppose that another reason is that it really pays to do so, because they are getting their land cleared for nothing? Yes. The Chinamen pay them so much per acre, just a little more than they pay the Government for it, and they are getting their land cleared at the same time.
489. *By the Chairman*: Are you acquainted with the Daintree River? Yes.
490. Is it selected on both sides for a considerable distance? Yes.
491. Is the labour question the reason why these selections are not cultivated? Well, yes, chiefly. There are several reasons. The selectors are poor men, and thus were not in a position to make a start by clearing ground and growing maize; and when the sugar mill which was there was closed they could not get any work to do, and had to leave the district, and a good many of them gave up their selections. Some of them, however, had a little means, and they are still contented to work their selections, and they are working them profitably.
492. How many are there on the Daintree who are working their selections profitably? Four or five.
493. Then the larger selections were taken up by absentee proprietors. What is the reason why they are not cultivated? I suppose that the sugar industry was the cause of their selecting, and if they had to select the land now I do not think they would do so.
494. You have never yourself attempted to grow any tropical products at all? Nothing but cane. I planted forty acres of cane and it grew with very little trouble. That was on my brother's selection.
495. *By Mr. Cowley*: What labour did you use in planting it? Kanakas with one or two white men and myself to assist.
496. What did the white men do? In the summer time nothing at all.
497. What were they—overseers or labourers? Labourers. I kept them chiefly fencing and splitting timber.
498. Did the cane do well on this selection? Yes, first-rate.
499. Did you sell it? It has gone to waste as there are no appliances for crushing.
500. How far is it from Bribris? About one and a-half miles.
501. *By the Chairman*: Do you know anything about Bribris Plantation at all? Yes.
502. Do you know why it failed? Because of bad appliances and bad management combined.
503. Not because the sugar-cane would not grow? The sugar-cane grew splendidly.
504. Not because the price of sugar was low? No. If they had had the cane grown and carted to the mill and laid down for them, I do not think they would have made a penny out of it on account of the bad appliances.

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505. Had they cheap labour also? Yes, they had; and then they could not make it pay.
506. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is the manager of the plantation in the district? There is one there now.
507. Can we get information from him? Yes; and you can see the machinery for yourself.
508. *By the Chairman*: Have you devoted any attention at all to other articles outside of the growth of cane and maize, such as tea, coffee, and oranges? No; I have no knowledge of them myself, but I have seen others attempt to grow coffee. On the selection adjoining mine, coffee grows very well.
509. Do you know Hart's? Yes; that is the selection I mean.
510. Would you consider him a successful selector? I don't consider him a successful selector from a monetary point of view.
511. Has he endeavoured to develop the resources of the district? Oh, yes. He has got on in a muddling sort of way; he has planted fruit trees, and let them grow up, and there they have remained.
512. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you believe that he is a practical man and understands what he is about? I believe he understands a little about it. You will see when you go to his place that it has not got the attention it requires.
513. *By the Chairman*: If you were to plant your ground with orange trees would you accept Hart's opinion as to the description of trees, and how to plant them? Yes; he has a little practical knowledge of fruit growing.
514. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are there many forfeited selections on the Mossman? Yes; a few.
515. Can you tell the cause of forfeiture? The aboriginals were the reason of two of the settlers clearing out. At the time Barnard was murdered they got frightened and went away. Barnard and his brother had homestead selections adjoining each other.
516. How long ago was that? About four years.
517. What was the cause of the other desertions; was it want of labour or bad communications? Both. We have a wet climate here, and it is seldom that the roads are as good as now. I have seen two years during which the roads were impassable. During those two years the longest spell of dry weather was fifteen and a-half days. The continual showers kept the roads soft. At that time many of the Chinamen picked their maize and had sheds to dry it in. I did not go to that trouble, and that may be one reason why I did not save any of it.
518. *By the Chairman*: Had the murder of Barnard a deterrent effect on settlement in this district? It had at the time, but I believe it has recovered from that now.
519. Are the aboriginal natives as troublesome now as they are alleged to have been then? No.
520. Have they decreased in numbers? I think so. They never trouble me.
521. Have they become more used to European civilization? Yes; and they are more about the town now.
522. Do you know of any cruelty being practised to any of them? No.
523. Was the murder of Barnard more of a reprisal, or was it a treacherous premeditated murder? It was a treacherous nicely-planned murder, without any provocation on the part of the selector. They murdered the man for plunder.
524. *By Mr. Cowley*: What is the general health of the white people on the river? Pretty good.
525. Although you have said before that the white men can't work in the heat, still there is very little fever, is there not? There has been very little during the past three years.
526. Have those three years been exceptionally dry? Last year was, but the previous two years were wet.
527. Then as a whole you consider this a healthy district for the agriculturist? Yes; I would sooner live on the Mossman River than on the Johnstone River.
528. From your five years' experience do you think that white men can work and do a fair day's work here, or can they not? Certainly not. I am positive they can not. If you wish, I will give you one year's experience I had six years ago.
529. What is your experience since the fever abated? A white man can not do a fair day's work now. The wages you would have to pay a white man here would be fully 25 per cent dearer than it would be about Bundaberg.
530. Can they do the work? There are five months of the year that they cannot do the work. When a man stoops to hoe, whether amongst cane or maize, he cannot stand the work in hot weather. On account of the excessive heat it is as much as I can do to walk through amongst the cane.
531. *By the Chairman*: Then for five months out of the year, you are of the opinion, white men could not do the work that a kanaka does? They could not. It seems to me that the hotter the weather the better the kanaka can work. In the heat a white man can do nothing but drink tea, and can't eat; but a kanaka thinks nothing of eating 1lb. of meat.
532. Have you seen white men attempting to work during these five hot months? I had men who were working for me try, and when it was too hot for them I did not ask them to work.
533. Do you know of your own knowledge that white men have refused to work during these five months of the year? Yes; when it has been too hot to work, when there was only the hoeing up of the ground previous to planting the cane to do.
534. *By Mr. Cowley*: Supposing that the land was cleared of scrub and brought under the plough, can white men work then? No. The weather gets so hot during five months of the year, that I consider that it would be dangerous for white men to work in the field.
535. Even if the scrub was cleared away, and the country under the plough. Yes; even if the scrub was cleared. A very few days ago a man was ploughing land at Bribri, and had been at work a very few minutes when, on coming to the end of a furrow, he sat down under the shade of a tree and said, "If I could get a man to do the work I would not do it myself." He was working for himself—he was not a hired man—and he said that if he could get a hired man to do the work, he would not risk his own life doing it.
536. What is the average price paid to white men? About 25s. a week. I have a married couple, and they get £100 a year and their rations.
537. Have you employed any aboriginals? No.
538. Have you employed any Chinamen? Only in the scrub.
539. What did you pay them? 25s. a week.
540. Have you any experience in exporting fruit? No.

541. *By*

John Dorrens 541. *By the Chairman*: When you said previously that you paid kanakas 12s. and £1 per week, do the returns from their labour pay you to give that rate of wages? I am building a cottage at present, and require the ground about it for a garden. This has been a dry season for clearing the ground, and that is the work I have employed them on.

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542. Did they take to the work? Yes; clearing ground is the very work they can do.

543. Was it heavily timbered ground? Yes, it was.

544. *By Mr. Cowley*: At that rate of wages, how much would it cost to clear an acre? At that rate I could not clear it under £9 an acre; in fact my estimate was £9 10s. That is simply cutting down and burning off, and does not include stumping. There are two or three acres that cost £20 an acre, as I stumped the whole of it.

545. Burning off does not clear the land; all the heavy timber is left? Yes; some of the big logs won't burn off.

546. Then you pay £9 an acre for simply cutting down and burning off what will burn off? Yes.

547. *By the Chairman*: How do you cultivate the land, by the plough or hoe? By the hoe.

548. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say you pay 12s. a week and £1 a week to a kanaka; would it pay you to give them that for working sugar-cane? No.

549. You have had experience in growing cane? Yes.

550. Where? In Bundaberg.

551. From your experience of growing cane in Bundaberg, would it pay you to grow cane on the Mossman if you had to pay 12s. a week for kanakas? No, it would not. With a sugar-mill you would require 800 acres under cane to supply it. If it was all scrub land it would take from 150 to 200 kanakas to look after it. Look what an amount of money that would be at 12s. each per week.

552. Supposing that your brother comes here and commences his mill and grows cane, what labour will you employ? I do not think you could get anything better than kanaka.

553. Would you then make arrangements to indent the labour? Yes.

554. But you could not afford to pay the rate of wages asked by a time-expired kanaka? No; it would be too expensive.

555. If you could get them at from £6 to £10 a year it would pay? Yes, at from £8 to £15 per annum, according to the men.

556. Were you here when Bribri was placed under sugar cultivation? Yes. It is about five years ago, about 1884. I can state a fact about white labour that has come within my own knowledge and experience of sixteen years. Some time ago I took a contract to clear the township of Mourilyan Harbour, about fifty acres. We were tied to time. We took five Chinamen, seven white men, and seven kanakas. We were working from the 1st of December till the last day of February, and the most time during that period that any of the white men made was twenty-seven days. The Chinamen averaged about half-time—namely, six weeks, and the kanakas did not lose one day, with the exception of one man who met with an accident. They worked well. I was with them myself.

557. What price per acre did you get for clearing? £9 5s.

558. Was that piece of land—that fifty acres—swamp or ridge? It was hilly. It was a beautiful place to work, we always had a fine breeze. The men were working under trees, felling them, and it was nice work for hot weather; but the white men could not work, and would lie up for a fortnight, and when they commenced work again they dropped off one by one until none were working but myself.

559. Were you the overseer? Yes.

560. Then, all the men gave way before the blacks? Yes, and the conditions were favourable for white men working. It astonished me to see how the kanakas got through the work.

561. *By the Chairman*: As you are aware, this Commission before whom you are now being examined was appointed by the Government to promote tropical agriculture, as well as to inquire into the present depressed state of the sugar industry. Have you any suggestions which you can offer by which tropical agriculture can be promoted in this district? It depends on the labour question entirely. That is the only suggestion I can offer. Give the settlers cheap labour, and then they will get on.

562. When you say cheap labour, what do you mean? Kanaka labour.

563. Have you had any experience with Cingalese or Javanese? No.

564. Are any Javanese imported to the district? No.

565. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do the kanakas give you any trouble? No trouble whatever. They give no trouble when they are treated properly.

566. If you treat them fairly they do a fair day's work? Yes.

567. Is there much mortality amongst them? No.

568. Have you had any deaths amongst your kanakas? No; and I have only had one sick boy.

569. *By the Chairman*: Do they bring their wives? Some of them.

570. *By Mr. Cowley*: If you were indenting any kanakas, would you have any objection to their bringing their wives? No, none whatever. I had a kanaka and his wife working for me once, and I gave them a room to themselves.

571. *By the Chairman*: Are there any time-expired kanakas here? Yes, thirty or forty.

572. Do they prefer staying here to returning to their islands? Yes. There are some here who were working at Bribri, and they have never had the wages due to them paid; and they remain about the district hoping to get their money some day.

573. Then these Bribri men are here letting themselves out to work to keep themselves until their wages are paid to them? Yes. Irrespective of these there are some twenty others here, and they prefer to remain because they get good wages and are useful men.

574. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are they any expense to the Government? No, none whatever.

575. Do they keep their health? Yes, and the hotter the weather the better they seem to like it. The only thing they ever complain of is pain in the chest in cold weather.

576. *By the Chairman*: Are they temperate? The majority are; only three or four come to the public-house. The majority of them put their money in the bank.

577. Are those time-expired men in any way obnoxious to the white labouring population? No, they are not.

578. And do the white labouring population of Port Douglas offer any objection to the kanakas? None whatever.

579. *By*

579. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is the employment of kanaka labour conducive to the employment of white labour? Certainly. I would not have employed white men if I had not been employing kanakas. Kanakas like white men to bewitch them.

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580. *By the Chairman*: Do you think that if there was an experimental farm here to test the capacity of the district for growing certain tropical products of commercial value, by which selectors who have taken up land could see what to grow profitably, it would be a benefit to the district? Certainly, it would assist selectors greatly, because it would give them many tropical fruits which they have not now got.

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581. Then you think there is a want of information as to what tropical products could be grown here? Yes. I have been trying to get fruit trees for two or three years, and can't get them. I have been trying to get allspice, mangosteen, and nutmeg—I mean the nutmeg of commerce.

582. Do you not know that the Acclimatisation Society of Brisbane is in the habit of distributing plants to people? Yes; but only two or three trees to one person.

583. Do you think that the Acclimatisation Society does not meet the requirements of a large district like this? Nothing like it.

584. If an experimental farm were on the ground it would be able to scatter the plants more widely? Yes, the selector would be able to get assistance from the farm in the shape of seeds and plants. The only mangosteens and allspice I have seen in the district are at Stewart's farm on the Daintree. He has four of each, which he got from the Acclimatisation Society, and four trees are not worth planting.

MICHAEL WALSH examined:

585. *By the Chairman*: What are you, Mr. Walsh? I am a member of the firm of Walsh and Co., trading in Port Douglas, Cairns, and Herberton.

M. Walsh.

586. You are also chairman of the Divisional Board of Port Douglas? Yes; I have been in Queensland since 1862—that is 27 years, and in this district since it was opened in 1877—that is nearly 12 years. Since 1874 I have been residing in the Cook District.

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587. Does your firm act as shipping agents in Port Douglas? Yes.

588. Are you agents for the A.U.S.N.Co.? Yes.

589. Do you ship fruit for growers here to the southern colonies? Yes, for growers and for ourselves.

590. What freight is charged for sending an ordinary bunch of bananas from Port Douglas to Sydney? The company's schedule freight is 1s. per bunch, no matter where it is bound—to Brisbane, Townsville, Sydney, or Melbourne. That is the ruling rate. For fruit in cases, the charge is half the outwards freight.

591. What is that? The rate is 15s. per ton as far south as Mackay, 17s. 6d. per ton to Brisbane, and 20s. per ton to Sydney. That is per ton measurement.

592. Have you heard recently of any loss occurring in fruit that has been taken to the south? Yes, by the s.s. "Cintru."

593. Was this loss heavy? I sent 316 bunches of bananas to a consignee in Melbourne. These were my own, for which I paid the grower 1s. 4d. per bunch cash on delivery. The result was that I got a wire from the consignee stating that the entire shipment of bananas by the "Cintru" was rotten. Then I got a letter from the consignee saying that he had seen the captain of the "Cintru," and that the captain assured him that it was the hottest trip he ever had. It was Christmas week. The officers of the ship reported to him that the bananas were greatly sunk down through ripening. The Sydney bananas were landed in fair order, but the Melbourne bananas, having to be kept three days longer in the steamer, were utterly spoiled when they got to Melbourne.

594. *By Mr. Cowley*: Was that an exceptional case? Yes. From previous shipments we have had fair returns, and all this season we have had good returns; while the Melbourne Exhibition has been open, the demand for bananas has been very great. A demand for bananas has also been created in consequence of the Fiji boats not running. There was for a time some hutch about getting coal during the coal strike, and the Fiji boats would not go to Melbourne. Between June and December last, 3,233 bunches have been sent to Melbourne, and with the exception of those sent by the "Cintru" we have had good returns.

595. *By the Chairman*: Bananas are the principal tropical fruit grown here? Yes; but we have large shipments of pineapples, mangoes, oranges, limes, lemons, small shipments of granadillas, and even passion fruit is shipped from here.

596. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you think that it would be advantageous—that it would conduce to the fruit-grower's prosperity in this district—if there were special boats for fruit, and if the fruit was properly carried, instead of being piled up in heaps? Yes; I believe that had the bananas sent by the "Cintru" been properly stowed away in rows, separated by battens, there would not, notwithstanding the heat, have been such a poor result.

597. How is the fruit grown on the Mossman and Daintree brought to Port Douglas for shipment? All the bananas that come from the Daintree and Mossman come in boats.

598. Do the settlers bring them in their own boats? No; only one or two. The Daintree River bananas are brought in by the mailman who comes in on Saturday in time for Saturday's steamer. The fruit is damaged having to be so much handled and transhipped. To prevent handling, we get the boats to discharge the bananas into the lighter and not on to the wharf. Sometimes, however, they are compelled to put the bananas on the wharf. When they are put on to the lighter they are packed on the deck, excepting when there are a very large number, and then we have to put them down below.

599. You stated that you gave 1s. 4d. a bunch for bananas: is that about the average price or is it exceptional? It is a medium price. I paid 1s. 10d. a bunch for 6,000 bunches, two years ago. That was the highest price I have paid. The average price this year has been about 1s. a bunch; they have been sold at from 10d. to 1s. 3d.

600. Then, as a rule, is there a margin of profit at that price, if the shipment is successful, and they are marketable when they reach Melbourne? Yes.

601. Will the loss on the last shipment influence you in any way in respect to sending others? I intend still to go on. At this time of the year we have to be guided in our shipments by the southern fruit coming into the market. The fruit comes in from Tasmania about this time, and there is not so much demand for fruit from the north in Sydney or Melbourne. I ascertained, when in Sydney last, when bananas would take best there, and it is safe to ship them up to the middle of December, but after that it is a risk.

602. How

- M. Walsh. 602. How long does the slack season last? Until we start shipping again about May.
603. As a shipping agent, have you had any complaints from growers as to loss? Yes.
- 11 Jan., 1889. 604. From ullage? Yes.
605. Any great loss? Yes.
606. What have been the nature of the complaints? When my agents send in my account sales, growers in the district ask me how my lot has gone off, and we compare notes; in several instances when the returns have come in they have left the shipper in debt to the agent.
607. Has this been through the destruction of the fruit, or through defaulting agents or partners? I think it was owing to the natural decay of fruit from ripeness.
608. Do you send away only one kind of banana? Really, I could not tell you. They appear to be all one class of banana. None but the Cavendish bananas grow here.
609. By the Chairman: Don't you think that the shipping company ought to make better provision for carrying fruit to the southern market? I know that the company is anxious to do so, and I got a copy of a letter from the company to the officers asking them to handle the fruit with all possible care, and asking us as agents to do all in our power to see that it was safely shipped, and if the officers or men were seen to handle the fruit roughly to report it to the captain. But if there has to be any transshipment in Brisbane it means that the fruit has to be taken out of one ship and put into another vessel, and there have been more complaints about transshipment, for it means ruin.
610. By Mr. Cowley: Are the bananas generally carried on deck or below? In the "Barcoo" on deck. She has a horse awning and the fruit is stowed under it unless it is full, and then they are put in the hold. In other steamers they are carried in the between-decks, and the hatches have gratings so as to admit the air.
611. Do you ever know of bananas being placed on deck without any awning over them? No, I never saw them on deck except on the "Barcoo," and she has a large wooden awning for horses, under which the bananas are stored. All the Sydney fruit is carried on deck.
612. By the Chairman: Of course you are not a practical fruit-grower yourself? No.
613. You are not a selector? Yes; but in Cairns.
614. You are pretty well acquainted with the Mossman and Daintree Rivers, and know the selectors who are located there? Yes.
615. Can you give the Commission any reason for the present depression in tropical agriculture in this district? I can give a general opinion. I think that a great deal of the maize-growing failure is owing to the primitive way of working the soil with the hoe. The growers just dropped the corn in the hoed ridges, and after two or three crops the soil is not pulverised and does not produce well. In several cases the land has been leased to Chinamen at a peppercorn rental. As to the general failure of sugar, we have only had one sugar plantation actively at work in the district and that was the Bribri, on the Mossman; and I believe that if that plantation had been properly managed it would have paid. But it was mismanaged, as I know from my own knowledge.
616. What did the mismanagement consist of? The first proprietor who took it up was Mrs. Parker, and she had several changes of management, and every new manager when the machinery was put up had his own idea as to how it should be done, and all kept making additions and alterations. That is one of the reasons of the breaking up of the plantation. The owner being a lady, and having trusted to the four managers who were there in a few years, did not make the plantation a success.
617. Is the plantation now in financial difficulties? Yes, it is in the hands of the Trustee of Insolvency, Mr. Pearson.
618. Then the original proprietress of the plantation became insolvent? No, not the late proprietress—Mrs. Parker's son-in-law, Mr. Faviell, became insolvent.
619. With what labour was the plantation worked? With kanaka, Chinese, and European labour.
620. Then you put the non-success entirely down to mismanagement? Yes, I do.
621. Not to the low price of sugar? If the plantation had been worked properly it ought to have paid.
622. Why? Because it is a splendid little piece of land.
623. By Mr. Cowley: Is this simply a surmise on your part, as you have no practical experience in these matters? All surmise; I have no practical experience whatever.
624. By the Chairman: Why is it that throughout the whole of the Daintree River selections there are only three or four residential selectors? Principally owing to the seasons being so uncertain, and the price obtained for the produce being hardly enough to pay for the cutting of the corn. It did not pay the European selectors, so they let their land on lease to Chinamen. I may tell you as chairman of the Divisional Board that, in these new scrub districts up here, it is a great undertaking for a settler to carry his produce to market. From the Daintree River they have to pay 10s. a ton for carrying corn a total distance of two or three miles, to the river; then 10s. more per ton to take it by river to the wharf at Port Douglas;—that is, altogether, from the selection to the wharf, £1 per ton.
625. What would be the whole of the distance? The land carriage is two, three, and three and a-half miles, and the water carriage from eight to nine miles. From the Mossman it is about four miles.
626. £1 per ton of maize—would that be 6d. a bushel? Yes.
627. Then if you buy the maize on the selector's own ground you have to pay 6d. per bushel additional to get it up here? Yes.
628. That affects the price of buying maize from the farmer, and you deduct it from the price you pay the growers? Yes.
629. By Mr. Cowley: What is the average price you pay for maize per ton? We pay from £6 to £7 per ton.
630. By the Chairman: Why do you buy by the ton? It is easier to calculate it in that way, and we generally buy by the ton. Up country we sell by the bushel.
631. Then the price you pay is about 3s. 6d. per bushel? Yes; that is at the wharf. The farmers have to pay 6d. out of that for bringing it to the wharf.
632. You are aware that this Commission is appointed to obtain suggestions from local residents as to how their district can be improved in the direction of tropical agriculture. Have you any suggestions to offer by which this district—Port Douglas—can be improved in regard to the growth of other articles outside of sugar? I think that tropical agriculture generally, especially those tropical fruits such as

coffee,

coffee, tobacco, &c., could be profitably grown if information as to their growth and cultivation and the proper plants to use was disseminated amongst the settlers. Here they are all pioneers, and have to learn by experience, and it has been all experimental on all the selections. I think it would be a great benefit if experimental farms were established in some districts, and I believe it would do no harm if a lecturer were sent round the different agricultural settlements, and travelling about amongst the selectors to induce them to improve their land.

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633. *Has the labour question anything to do with the present depressed state of the industry?* Yes. In my opinion, I think so. The labour question has a great deal to do with tropical agriculture here, because we have to compete with other tropical agricultural countries, where they have the privilege of cheaper labour than we can obtain here. I believe in the summer time here, especially in the cane fields where I have seen men at work, that the temperature is too trying for Europeans. I mean by that—too trying for them to engage in field labour. To make a success of it I certainly think that, especially to carry it on in a large scale, we ought to have the privilege of employing cheap labour—kanaka labour. They ought to be confined solely to cane labour—that is, labour in the cane field.

634. *By Mr. Cowley:* As an old resident, and as one not engaged in agriculture, do you think that the employment of coloured labour is detrimental to the interests of the white people in this district? I think that kanaka labour is not detrimental, but I think the employment of Chinese, Javanese, and Cingalese is.

635. *By the Chairman:* That is, you think the white population would resent the employment of coolies, Chinese, Javanese, and Cingalese, but not kanakas? No, they would not if the kanakas was confined to the cane field, and to agricultural labour only.

636. *Do you know if any Javanese are employed in this district or not?* Yes; there were some at Bloomfield, but none in the immediate neighbourhood of the town.

637. *By Mr. Cowley:* Did you ever send any fruit to Herberton? I know a selector who has taken several loads of oranges to Herberton and Mount Albion, and disposed of them satisfactorily.

638. *Is there a good market for fruit there?* Yes.

639. *Is it a difficult road to take them?* No; Cobb's coach runs twice a week.

640. *Then they have not to be packed, but can be carted?* Yes; a dray load can be sold in a day in Herberton.

641. *Is there a market for a large quantity of fruit there?* No; not for a large quantity at present, but you can depend upon there being a large population there. There are a number of selections in the scrub around Herberton. Maize has been a great failure for some years in Herberton, owing to the blight. Some of the selectors think that there is some want in the soil. It is a beautiful red soil, and they think that what it wants is lime.

642. *By the Chairman:* Can you inform us of the quantity of maize that you have exported from 1884 to 1886? Our company in three years has exported 1,310 tons of maize from this port to Normanton, Cooktown, and even to Brisbane. That would be 52,400 bushels.

643. *Since 1886 has the growth of maize fallen off considerably?* Yes; and there is a greater local demand for it.

644. *That is, that the cultivation of maize has declined and the consumption increased?* Yes.

645. *Why will farmers not grow maize when they know they can get a fair price for it?* I do not know. Only Chinamen grow it. When the Chinamen have cleared the land, I think the Europeans will take it. When the stumps have rotted and the plough can be used, the selectors will use the land themselves more in the future.

646. *Are you obliged now to import maize?* Yes, small lots have been coming in; but several hundred tons have come here this dry season.

647. *What do you charge per bushel to the consumer?* 6s. a bushel. It is packed to Herberton, and I know instances where it has cost £12 a ton here, and £14 per ton for packing to Herberton; that is 13s. a bushel at Mount Albion.

648. *Then I take it that at the present time, with the large demand for maize in the Herberton district, there is a profitable market here for the growth of maize?* Yes.

649. *And it could be grown with European labour?* Yes, when they can put their plough into the land, but a European will not do hoc work. I know of two lots being ploughed up by a selector. Pringle on the Mossman is doing so.

650. *It is, then, this distaste for hoc work on selections that causes the holder to lease his land to Chinamen, on a clearing lease?* Yes; partly.

651. *Is there another reason?* There is the great heat here in summer time.

652. *Then one reason for selectors leasing land to Chinamen for the cultivation of maize is the great heat in summer time?* Yes; the selector gets the land worked by Chinamen, and the Chinamen crops it for a few years, and during that time the stumps are rotting, and in a few years if the undergrowth is kept down the selectors will be able to work it.

653. *Do the labouring population, after accumulating means, ever exhibit any inclination to settle on the land and become their own masters?* Yes; I know several instances of bailiffs who were bailiffing here, who took up selections afterwards.

654. *Have they become successful selectors?* Unfortunately, no.

655. *From what cause?* They, being so isolated on the Daintree, suffered from the depredations of the blacks. I know of four or five on the Daintree who could not make a living on account of the depredations of the blacks. I know several who have been robbed several times of everything.

656. *Have any of those depredations been of recent origin?* No, about twelve or eighteen months ago. I have not heard of any more recently, because there is a native police camp between the Mossman and the Daintree, and that has had a wholesome effect.

657. *Do you think that the aboriginals are becoming more accustomed to European civilisation? They come into town now, and I think that makes them more cunning, and they are able to do more mischief when in the bush.*

658. *Do you think that the depredations of the blacks is one reason why so much land is unoccupied on the Daintree?* Yes; where young Barnard was killed on the Daintree, two young men, who had selections close by, left immediately. I might mention another drawback to the Daintree, and that is

that

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that there are a lot of large selections, 1,280 acres each, which were bailiffed, and when the conditions were complied with the owners made freeholds of them, and they are lying idle there now. They are waiting for the unearned increment.

659. Are those lands held by absentee proprietors? Yes.

660. Do they reside in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane? Principally in Queensland; I do not know of any outside the colony.

661. Are there any selections on the Mossman in the same condition as those on the Daintree? No; I don't think so.

662. On the Mossman are the selections all held by *bona fide* selectors who are working on their holdings? Yes.

663. Then there is nothing that you can suggest to the Commission by which agriculture on the Daintree can be in any way promoted or improved, on account of the selections being in the hands of absentees? They are not all in the hands of absentees. There are several there who work their own land. Stewart is working very hard. They expected to get a mill but did not.

664. Did the Government offer to put up a central mill at the Mossman district? Yes.

665. Why did the selectors decline it? Several of them were agreeable to sign the conditions; in fact, I believe some of them did so. But there was only £12,000 when Mackay had had its drawback, and it was hardly worth coming to Port Douglas with £12,000, as they would have had to put more money on the Estimates. Mr. Hodgkinson said that if the settlers would sign the agreement, the additional money required would be asked for. But there were a few amongst the selectors to whom it was a question of not being allowed to employ black labour, and they felt that they could not sign the agreement on those conditions.

666. By Mr. Cowley: Do you know any of these absentee proprietors on the Daintree? Yes.

667. What I want to know is this—do you know what reason it is that they are not cultivating their land; is it on account of the labour question, or why are they waiting for the unearned increment? I believe the labour question is the great difficulty in the way of those lands being cultivated.

668. Have they fulfilled their conditions on these selections and are they freeholds? They have received certificates.

669. What was the original price of the land? All the land on the Daintree was selected at £1 per acre, and it must have cost the proprietors at least 30s. per acre independent of the bailiffs' fees. It has cost them more than 30s. an acre before they got their certificates, and for that outlay they have got no return, and obtained no benefit. They could not get 17s. 6d. an acre for the land now.

670. By the Chairman: What is the general health of the district? Very good.

671. And on the Daintree and Mossman? In both places the health is very good. When people first came to the district the fever was bad, but now since the land was cleared the health of the district is good.

672. Does that apply to coloured labour—kanakas—as well as to Europeans? Yes.

673. Would the white population of Port Douglas object to kanakas being employed in growing maize? Some of them would.

674. Then the opinion generally of the white population of Port Douglas is that there would be no objection to employing the kanakas in the cane field? I am almost sure they would not object. There might be a few isolated exceptions.

675. Then it is not the unanimous opinion? I believe it is unanimous, with a very few exceptions.

676. Do you think that public opinion is favourable to the kanaka being employed outside of the cane field? I think it is unfavourable.

677. By Mr. Cowley: Would there be any objection to kanakas being employed in coffee cultivation? Yes, I think there would, as it is work a white man can do.

678. Are Europeans anxious at 30s. a week to go and fell scrub and work amongst it? Yes, at 30s. a week and rations.

679. You think they would take to the work? Yes, I can get plenty of Europeans to fell scrub at 30s. a week and rations; but they will not hoe land and grow maize on their own account, because it would not pay them.

680. By the Chairman: Do you think that the climate here has any serious effect on Europeans clearing timber off land? I do not. I am acquainted with timber getters, and those men worked in the scrub for years and are healthy men still. Some of them have been working in the scrub for twelve years and are still strong men.

681. Do you know, of your own knowledge, that Europeans would not refuse 30s. a week and rations to clear scrub? I know they would not.

682. By Mr. Cowley: Do not those cedar getters work in the shade? Yes, they work under the shade, but it is very close and very trying.

683. By the Chairman: Do you think that the cultivation of oranges, lemons, and limes can be carried on by European labour? Yes.

684. Profitably? Yes. It is being done now by Montgomerie and Robbins on the Mowbray, about seven miles from town, and by J. Trezise, who takes oranges to Herberton.

FRIDAY, 11 JANUARY, 1889.

PORT DOUGLAS DISTRICT.

(At Mayfield.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

JOHN JAMES MONTGOMERIE examined:

J. J.
Montgomerie.

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685. *By the Chairman*: Did you and your partner Mr. Robbins take up this selection? Yes.
686. What is the area? 160 acres.
687. Under what Act was it taken up? Under the 1876 Act.
688. Is it conditional, or homestead? It is a homestead selection.
689. How many acres do you have now under cultivation? The whole of it except the grazing land. Some of it is out of cultivation—now and is under grass. It was in cultivation two years ago. Now about one-half is in cultivation and one-half in grass.
690. *By Mr. King*: Has the other half been under cultivation? Yes. There are eighty acres now under cultivation.
691. *By the Chairman*: What articles do you chiefly cultivate? At first maize. It paid very well for two or three years, when the ground was easily cleared and the price was fair; but after that it took three times the amount of labour to clear the land, and the price went down and it would not pay at all. The land was principally cleared by Chinamen. We worked a part ourselves, but all the scrub I let to Chinamen on a clearing lease. They found out afterwards that rice would grow very well on the land. Four years ago they began to grow rice, and grew it very well indeed. They had a very good return, as much as two tons of paddy to the acre.
692. At the present time eighty acres are under cultivation, and are being treated entirely by yourself and partner? No; part is in the hands of two Chinamen.
693. Under what conditions? They pay me a rent. The old clearing lease has expired.
694. What do they devote their attention to? Growing rice, maize, and bananas, but principally to garden produce.
695. *By Mr. King*: What is the average crop of maize? Some of the low-lying fields have given as much as 70 bushels to the acre.
696. What is the average crop? About fifty bushels, if there is no blight. Last year we suffered from the blight.
697. How many crops do you get in one year? Two crops off the same ground.
698. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did the blight last year affect the yield much? Yes.
699. What is it like? A young fly got into the young corn, and under the sheath of the cob.
700. What was the last crop like? Six months ago it was a very good crop, and a high price was obtained for it.
701. When was the crop blighted? This time twelve months.
702. Was it all lost? No; just patches.
703. *By Mr. King*: How much did the crops go the acre? About half a crop.
704. *By the Chairman*: What are you now growing yourself on the other part of the selection? Fruit principally—oranges, mangoes, and other fruits. We also grow oats for chaff. We go in for chaff; having a chaff-cutter we cut it up.
705. Are oats successfully grown here? Very well indeed.
706. What average crop do you get per acre? $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons.
707. Does it grow rank or thin? It grows very well here, on the low ground it got too rank.
708. *By Mr. Cowley*: It is only in the winter months that you grow oats? Yes.
709. *By the Chairman*: How many cases of oranges do you grow per annum? I sold about 6,000 dozen last year.
710. What was the average price per dozen? I get 6d. and 5d. on the ground. It is delivered at Port Douglas.
711. Have you had occasion to ship any of those oranges to other parts of the colony? I have.
712. Have you reason to complain of the treatment of the fruit on the steamers? Not as far as I myself am concerned, as I only exported a small quantity for myself; but parties I have sold them to made great complaints, and said they were afraid to buy any more of them.
713. What were the nature of their complaints? That the cases were robbed.
714. *By Mr. Cowley*: Does the risk the buyers run in shipping affect the price paid to you? Yes, to a very considerable extent.
715. *By the Chairman*: Can you dispose of your mangoes quickly? This year they did not go off very well. I have sold a few, but more have been allowed to rot on the ground.
716. Why? Just for the same reason, that we are afraid to send them away. The mango is a fruit that does not carry well. There is a great fault with exporters in packing mangoes—they do not understand how to do it. I think they put too many in a case. In regard to oranges they put 40 or 50 dozen into a big case and send it for a big trip, and the oranges become rotten: that is the exporters' fault. But when oranges are sent in fruit cases ten dozen at a time, such is not the case.
717. I understand you to mean that if oranges could be sent safely without being pilfered on the voyage, both north and south, that it would be a profitably grown crop? Yes.
718. *By Mr. Cowley*: At 6d. a dozen? Yes, and that would pay us very well.
719. Does that include all kinds? Yes, oranges, citrons and lemons; 6d. a dozen all round would pay us.
720. Are your orange trees seedling or worked trees? I have about twenty seedlings; all the rest are grafted.
721. Which do you find doing best, the seedling or the worked tree? I find the seedlings very healthy.
722. Do they bear as freely and as good fruit? They bear quite equal to the worked trees.
723. Are the worked trees grafted on a lemon stock? Principally lemon; some are grafted on cumquats.
724. Did you find that those died? Yes.
725. At about what age? I think the drought killed them; they died off in a couple of years.
726. Do you think it safest and best, to plant seedlings? Yes, seedlings from good oranges. I have a lot of seedlings in now from my own oranges. I planted orange seed and the trees came up cumquats. That was a very strange thing. There are trees that bore cumquats the first year and now they are bearing mandarins.

727. How

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727. How long does it take a seedling to bear? I have them bearing in four years from the seed. There were a dozen oranges on two or three of them, and in the fifth year they gave a full crop. They are in the front of the house now.
728. *By Mr. King*: Do you grow any quantity of bananas? I don't, but the Chinamen have about three acres in crop. The way they are treated on the steamers prevents the grower being able to sell them. Previous shipments have been piled up on one another and crushed in the holds, and they were one mass of filth when they got to Sydney. They ought to have the steamers fitted with shelves the same as I have seen in the fruit boats in America. That is the way they are carried from Jamaica. By this means only two bunches of bananas are placed on top of each other so that they don't by their own weight get crushed, and there is a free current of air. These shelves can be taken away when the bananas are discharged down south, and laid aside, so that they don't take up much room. They ought to have them in the steamers on this coast.
729. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you found any disease attack the trees? Yes; the oranges. The mangoes are free from disease. All the orange tribe are subject to disease—different kinds of scale.
730. What remedy do you use? We wash the trunks of the trees with lime. We also take kerosene and soap and fat, boiled up, and mix it up and put it on hot, and we find it effectual. It is very good for killing the scale on the leaf; but does not do much good to the trunk.
731. *By the Chairman*: Are you troubled with the borer here? No; the only thing we ever had the borer in was the fig. Just as they were coming into fruit the borer went in above the top of the ground and killed them.
732. Has the orange moth troubled you? Yes; but not to any great extent. We try to catch them, but that is all.
733. *By Mr. Cowley*: Which do you find most profitable—the orange or the mandarin? The orange is the most profitable, because it carries best; but, for local consumption, the mandarin is the best.
734. Is the mandarin very prolific? Yes—very.
735. What tree do you plant? The Emperor. There are three kinds.
736. Do you like the thorny or the thornless? I like the thornless best. The thorny mandarin is very good for carrying—better than the thornless; but for local consumption the thornless is the best.
737. So far as your trees have gone yet you have not had any serious obstruction to their flourishing? No; nothing.
738. And they bear regularly? Yes.
739. *By the Chairman*: Have you tried any other tropical produce of commercial value,—have you tried coffee? Yes; I have sixty trees of Liberian coffee.
740. How do they succeed? They bear very well.
741. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you made coffee from them? Yes. I have not sold any coffee, but have sent it away.
742. How did it succeed with the people to whom you sent it? They liked it. I did not sell it, I merely sent it as a present. I have sold the berries. I sold about 150 lbs. of berries to go to New Guinea, at 6d. a pound.
743. Have you tried the Arabian coffee? I have about ten trees, but they are very young.
744. Then you are not able to say which is the best? No. Those ten trees began bearing this year, and they are bearing very well. I think that the Arabian is the best for this climate, because it is easier to get it off the trees, and easier to get the husk off, and easier to prepare for market.
745. Do you think it bears the heaviest crop? Yes; I should think it does.
746. Is it easier pruned and kept in order? Well, we have never pruned them at all.
747. How much per tree do they bear of dry coffee? I could not state exactly. I have taken about a gallon of berries off one tree at one picking. That was from a Liberian tree. The cherry of the Liberian is much larger than the Arabian.
748. *By the Chairman*: Speaking from your experience, would you recommend coffee as a product to be grown by selectors? Yes; and I think it would be a profitable one. I planted the Liberian coffee trees in a very sandy place, and they grew wonderfully; and they have never been cleaned lately.
749. Have the whole of the eighty acres in your own charge been cultivated by yourself? Yes.
750. With what labour? Part of it is in the Chinamen's hands. I employ a little labour. We work it with horse labour, as we are able to use the plough. We stumped the land ourselves. We had labour to stump it.
751. *By Mr. Cowley*: What labour did you use in stumping? Chinamen, mostly.
752. How did you employ them? Some by contract and some we paid wages to.
753. How much would it cost to clear the scrub, without stumping it, in the first instance? It must have cost from £3 to £4 per acre. That would be the cost for clearing it and burning it all off. That was by contract.
754. How much would it cost to stump the ground? It would cost a great deal more, as the roots of the trees here are very hard to get out.
755. *By the Chairman*: Could you offer any suggestion by which your fruit industry could be in any way assisted? I should like something done with those Steamship Companies, to make them carry the fruit more safely, and so as to prevent this pilfering.
756. Do you think that that is at present the most serious disadvantage to the fruit-growing of the district? Most decidedly.
757. And a serious interference with the price of the product? Yes.
758. If an experimental farm was established in some central part of the district, where fruit trees and other articles of commercial value could be grown and practical advice given to selectors as to the best article to plant on their land, would that be an advantage? Yes, it would.
759. You think that there is information required to be given to the selectors? Yes. I mentioned the matter to Mr. McLean some months ago.
760. Speaking as a practical man yourself, in connection with your own industry, you yourself would be able to take advantage of it? I think so. It would be a great benefit to everybody.
761. *By Mr. King*: Have you tried tobacco? Very little. The plant grows very well, but I have never tried to manufacture tobacco out of it, or even to dry the leaf.
762. Do you know of any cocoa trees grown in the district? Yes; I have some of them myself, but the "borer"—the grub—gets into them and destroys them.
763. *By Mr. Cowley*: What kind of grub is it? It is the grub of some beetle. It is a big worm.

764. Is it the same as those you see in a manure heap? Very much like it, only white with a brown head. I had some very nice cocoa plants. I took great care of them, and planted them under the shade of the bananas, and they were growing very well, but they died off one by one. I found the grub deep in the roots. J. J. Montgomery.
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765. Have you grown many lemons? A good few of both Bengal and Lisbon. There is a good market for the Lisbon variety; you can sell them freely, but it is not so with the Bengal.

766. Have you any citrons? Yes; I have grown some of them. I used to get 3s. a dozen for them, for preserving purposes, down south.

767. Do you know that there is a preserving factory in Brisbane who are willing to take all you can grow, at a good figure? Yes; Messrs. Russell and Co. I received a circular from them saying they would send their traveller round to see me. Their traveller did come to Port Douglas, but he never came here.

768. You mentioned rice just now,—can it be grown profitably? Yes.

769. With what labour? Chinese labour, principally.

770. Could it be made to pay with European labour? I dare say it could, but there is a great deal of trouble about it.

771. *By Mr. King*: When the land is under the plough, I suppose a white man could cultivate rice as well as maize? Yes; there is a great deal of trouble with it. Of course we can always sell the paddy. The mill offers £9 per ton for paddy.

772. *By Mr. Cowley*: How many acres have you cultivated independent of the orchard? About twelve acres. All the rest is being cultivated by Chinese. I and my partner cultivate it without assistance.

773. If the scrub was once cleared and stumped could white men earn a good living in this neighbourhood? Yes; if they liked to.

774. Is it necessary that they should have the scrub cleared and stumped in the first instance? Yes; unless they have plenty of money to help them.

775. Then they must either have cheap labour or let the land to Chinamen? Yes; unless they have money to aid them to pay for white labour. We could not have done it ourselves without leasing it to Chinamen, and no one else would take it.

776. *By Mr. King*: Are there many other selectors on this river cultivating their land? There are some up here. Mr. Gray has a farm up here, and two parties in town have land here. There is also land cultivated by Mr. Trezise.

777. Do they cultivate anything? Yes; maize and bananas, and he grew oats, the same as we do. He ploughs his land.

778. Do the settlers keep their health well? They do now. It was very trying to the first settlers; the scrub was just being fallen and there was a great deal of fever here, but not worse than in other districts in the colony. I had twelve mouths of it myself.

779. Do the Chinamen suffer from the same complaint? Not so much as we do; it affects white people more than it does others.

780. Is there any other description of labour in this neighbourhood besides Chinamen and Europeans? No, I have not heard of any. I have never had kanakas working for me.

781. Did you ever try sugar? I have a few kinds of sugar growing here. It grows admirably, and the cane is very large. There was some talk of a sugar mill being established here, on Spring Creek, about a mile from here; but it never came to anything. We put a good deal of cane in on the strength of that. I made the Chinamen put in cane, but they had to root it all out again.

782. *By the Chairman*: How far are you off Bribri? About thirteen miles.

783. If a mill was erected somewhere within two or three miles from here would you grow cane? Yes.

784. *By Mr. King*: How many tons to the acre would the cane you tried here yield? I don't know. It was very large cane; it was fourteen feet in length. I put in ten or twelve different kinds, and they were considered the very best.

785. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you any other trees of commercial value growing here? I have cinnamon, cassia bark, jack-fruit, Otaheite gooseberry, Fiji apple, whampee, various kinds of custard apple, and several kinds of Indian fruits of which I did not get the names.

786. *By the Chairman*: Are they bearing fruit now? Some of the Indian trees have never borne fruit yet. They flowered but never gave fruit.

787. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are the others thriving and healthy? Yes.

788. Have you the tamarind? Yes, and they bear freely. I have never tried to sell them. I have a camphor laurel.

789. *By Mr. King*: Have you got any mangosteen? Yes, I have two plants.

790. Are they doing well? Yes, they are thriving very well.

791. *By Mr. Cowley*: How old are they? I have had them two years. They thrive best in the shade.

792. Have you any vanilla? Yes. I also have a "Monstera deliciosa." It is thriving well. I had about two dozen ripe fruit on it last year. This year there are about forty.

793. From your experience here do you think this is a good place for the growth of tropical trees? Yes, decidedly. They all thrive here.

794. Don't you think that you have an exceptionally favourable bit of ground? Well, some of it is good and some middling. I do not consider it exceptionally good.

795. Is there much land in the district like this? Yes, a good deal.

796. Of the same character, with drift at the bottom? Yes.

797. *By the Chairman*: And ready for settlement by anybody who will take it up? Yes. I may add that I have date palms and mulberries. There is a fruit tree here that has never borne fruit: I refer to the loquat. It is too hot for it. It is the same with the jacaranda.

798. How many beehives have you? Thirty.

799. Do you find the cultivation of bees profitable? Yes. I can dispose of my honey at remunerative prices. I send it all to Herberton, excepting a little which I sell here. I send it in bulk. I find it a valuable auxiliary to my orchard. They did rather poorly last year. There are two kinds of birds that are very destructive to the bees in the winter when they are weak. One called the military bird. It is a very small shrike. They eat the bees wholesale. The other is a bee-eater, and they eat the bees wholesale also.

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800. With the exception that these bee-eaters take the bees in the winter time, do you otherwise find it a profitable industry? Yes.

801. *By Mr. King*: Is the moth bad? We never saw them till last season. They are all Italian bees. It was rather a poor season, and I think it was because they were not disturbed for so long that the moths had time to lay their eggs. They seem to lay just at the joint of the frame.

802. *By the Chairman*: Then, taking the whole of your industries, are you satisfied with things as they are? Yes.

803. And the only improvement that can be made is in the way you have indicated? Yes. I should like to see a market for the fruit.

804. *By Mr. Cowley*: How many acres have you of an orchard? Eight acres orchard, and twelve under the plough—twenty in all. The Chinamen have eighty acres and the rest is under grass.

805. *By the Chairman*: Do you keep any cows? Yes.

806. And provide your own milk and butter? Yes. I got a young bull down from Messrs. Marshall and Slade, of Glengallan, Darling Downs.

SATURDAY, 12 JANUARY, 1889.

(At Port Douglas.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

HENRY SMITH examined:

H. Smith.
12 Jan., 1889.

807. *By the Chairman*: You are a shipping agent in Port Douglas? A commission agent.

808. In the course of your business have you been in the habit of shipping fruits to southern ports? Yes, to both southern and northern ports.

809. Have you had occasion to complain of the condition of the cargo at any time? Yes.

810. On what account? In case, fruit pilage; and in reference to bananas, on account of their arriving in very bad condition.

811. Has this been continuous or only an isolated case? It has been continuous.

812. Have you made any complaint to the representative of the shipping company? On many occasions.

813. With what result? I have one letter here from the agents, if you would like to see it; also the letter to which it is a reply. I could have produced several more if I had time to get them.

814. Will you read the letters? Yes. They are as follows:—

“Port Douglas, May 15th. 1888.

“DEAR SIR,

“I am in receipt of a letter from Messrs. Burns, Philp, and Co., of Thursday Island, to whom I have been consigning fruit, that a shipment made per ‘Birksgate’ on 23rd April arrived in a disgraceful state, all the cases being pilfered more or less, and one case oranges short.” From Messrs. Shankhu and Co., Normanton. I am informed ‘a good deal had been pilfered.’ From T. Webster, Croydon, who takes delivery of his fruit at Normanton, he says ‘pilferage great.’

“Last season I had similar complaints from many places. My agents at Rockhampton said it was so unsatisfactory receiving the fruit in such a condition that they would prefer me consigning to another agent. This refers to shipments of oranges, lemons, limes, mangoes, &c. Surely the risk of decay, bad markets, &c., is enough without being subject to wholesale robbery. A severe lesson should be taught. There are people who appear to think it no sin to rob fruit cases. I do not suppose these persons would enter a man’s private house or warehouse, but they should remember that fruit is also the result of man’s toil—in the one case when shipped by grower, and if shipped by purchaser possibly the merchandise by which he makes a living—and that it costs money as well as other goods.

“Among my late shipments complaints have been very great, and as all these shipments (except one, which was to an order) have been at my risk, I have suffered severe losses by this pilferage.

“I note shipping receipts are now signed ‘Not responsible for pilferage or decay;’ but do you not think it would be more credit to the Company, and a justice due to the shippers, that measures should be taken to remedy these complaints instead of shielding the Company by a clause ignoring any responsibility? I say that lately the pilferage carried on is a disgrace to any Company.

“Yours faithfully,

“HENRY SMITH.

“The Manager A.U.S.N. Company, Brisbane.”

“Australasian United Steam Navigation Co., Ltd.,

“Brisbane, 21st May. 1888.

“DEAR SIR,

“We beg to acknowledge receipt of your favour of 15th inst., and extremely regret to hear of the pillages your fruit shipments are subjected to, but we must mention that this is the first we have heard of it, no report of the occurrences having been received from our agents at Thursday Island, to whom we are now sending a copy of your letter.

“These fruit pillages are unfortunately becoming very frequent, and although in some instances they may take place while the goods are on the steamer, yet we believe the greater part of the fruit is taken on the wharves before shipment and after landing. The cases, too, are very often insecure and too easily broken open, and upon a steamer carrying so many passengers as the ‘Birksgate’ it is very difficult to prevent a certain amount of pilferage, although the officers have very strict instructions to prevent it.

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"This matter has been prominently brought before us lately, and we are doing our best to deal with it efficiently, but we must admit that it is a very difficult thing to bring these petty pillages home to anyone so as to be able to make an example. We are, however, issuing special instructions to the captains of our fleet and hope we shall not hear any more complaints.

H. Smith.

12 Jan., 1889.

"We are, Dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"per THE BRITISH INDIA AND QUEENSLAND AGENCY CO. LTD.,

"WM. SMELLIE,

"Managing Agent.

"Henry Smith Esq., Port Douglas."

I may state that I have been shipping for several years fruit in large quantities, and on several occasions I was very much surprised to find that it did not pay. I made inquiries and the agents reported that the fruit arrived in bad order, or over ripe, or that the market was bad; but I subsequently learned that they bought the fruit themselves. Those remarks as to the state of the market and the state of the fruit were sent to me so that they could buy the fruit themselves at their own price. One firm owed me £250, and after taking out a writ against them and losing a lot of time I had to be satisfied with taking £150, which they paid. I also lost £50 by a shipment of pineapples. Since then I have had very good agents, and I have not the slightest doubt of the representations made to me by them.

815. Who are your agents? My agents are—at Sydney, Mr. John Bridge; Thursday Island, Messrs. Burns, Philp and Co.; Brisbane, Mr. W. Blackford; Melbourne, W. Siddley and Co. I do not doubt any of them, and know that the representations they make on anything sent to them are the truth. In other cases I thought that the agents might be representing matters so as to get their own price, but now I have no cause to think so for one moment, and, in fact, I do not think so. I wrote to the company and sent them the following extract from the *Queenslander* of 12th May, 1888, entitled "Shipping Bananas for Market :"—

"A New York journal gives the following interesting particulars regarding the trade in West Indian bananas:—One firm now employs three steamships, which ply between New York and Jamaica, and are used solely for the importation of fruit, chiefly bananas. These steamers were built expressly for this business, and are constructed with countless ventilators and numerous moveable decks. The fruit is packed in a rather peculiar way. The bunches are stood on end, and two layers are thus spread over the bottom of the vessel's hold, when a moveable deck is fitted over them. Then two more layers of the fruit are laid down, and so on until the cargo is complete. A vessel carries from 8,000 to 18,000 bunches per trip.

"The middlemen in the banana business purchase their stock at the wharves as soon as the vessel begins to unload. They buy from 100 to 1,500 bunches at a time, and cart them immediately to the cellars, where they are ripened. The banana reaches this country in an extremely green condition. Upon reaching these cellars the bunches are hung on hooks suspended in rows along the ceiling. In the centre of the cellar is a gas or oil stove, which is generally so regulated as to preserve a temperature of 60 or 70 degrees Fahr. Here the fruit ripens gradually until it is ready for the retailers.

"Sometimes, however, when the demand is large for the ripened food, the cellar is heated to 75 degrees, and sometimes even to 80 deg., but at this temperature the banana is apt to 'cook,' as it is called, and lose its flavour. In general the temperature of the cellar is varied as the condition of the fruit demands. If the fruit is chilled a high temperature is imperative.

"The banana must be nursed as carefully as a child. Any sudden change of temperature or exposure to inclement weather is very sure to produce a bad effect. The fruit may be ripened in twenty-four hours from the time of its arrival, but it is much better if a longer time is taken.

"In the transportation of this fruit very great care is used. The bunches are first carefully folded in paper bags, and then packed in patent heated cars. These cars contain oil stoves, and are fitted with patent ventilators which preserve an even temperature about the fruit."

This I sent to the company to show that the thing could be done properly. The shipping facilities are much better elsewhere. I recommended that they should make a skeleton framework which could be easily taken down, and by means of which all the fruit could be carried without being damaged. Bananas at present could be shipped in great quantities from here, and if these frames were used would never suffer any loss. At present the bananas are packed in a great pile and the great weight crushes those which are undermost. I believe these frames could be put up very simply. At present a good deal of loss is occasioned by changing steamers and transshipping the fruit in Brisbane or Sydney. Bananas are shipped nearly grown, and not too much grown, and we endeavour to ship them so that they will be nearly ripe on arrival at their destination. But by the time they are being transhipped they are too ripe for all this handling. They get knocked about from the ship to the wharf and from the wharf back to another ship and are positively destroyed. Steamers are advertised to go direct to Melbourne and we ship fruit by them, only to find that the arrangements have been altered and the fruit has to be transhipped either in Brisbane or Sydney. I have a letter to prove it. If these steamers were run right through to Melbourne without any transshipment, except in the case of a calamity which no one can prevent, it would be the greatest benefit to us. But at present they promise to do so but do not keep their word. I do not think they have any right to do such a thing.

816. Then you think that a great deal of the injury done to bananas is the result of frequent transshipment? Yes.

817. By Mr. King: The company, from what you say, ship the bananas here and say they will take them to Melbourne, but when they get as far as Sydney they do not do so but tranship them into another steamer which takes them to Melbourne? Yes. They have a perfect right to do as they like with their own vessels, but when they advertise that they have three steamers running direct to Melbourne, we expect that such an arrangement will be carried out. I would not send to Melbourne if I thought any transshipment was to take place. I might, perhaps, do so in cold weather, but not in summer. We might ship to Brisbane, but that is a poor market.

818. By the Chairman: The effect of your business relations in this matter is that the loss on fruit at present seriously affects the price you pay to the grower? Yes. By the "Cintrá," last trip, not a single bunch of a consignment I shipped was landed sound in Melbourne. I had a letter to that effect from Mr. Siddley. I sent 196 bunches. I believe that a good deal of the loss was owing to bad stowage.

819. Have you to pay freight on fruit here before you ship it? Yes. Previously we used to pay half the freight at this end, but during the past twelve months we have had to pay the whole of it. In the case of oranges, lemons, mangoes, &c., it is disgraceful the amount of pillage that takes place. A man residing in

H. Smith. in Port Douglas shipped two or three cases of fruit to his brother at Cooktown. It happened that his brother, who had been at Townsville, was returning by the same steamer on which the fruit was shipped and he saw his own case of fruit being pilfered. I intend to take a trip myself some day and find out about this sort of thing.

12 Jan., 1889.

820. Would fruit-growing be made a profitable industry in Port Douglas if there were proper means of shipping fruit to the different ports in the south? Yes. An offer was made by a southern firm to send a steamer up here once every three weeks, and run direct to Sydney and Melbourne and carry fruit, but they wanted a guarantee of a certain quantity being shipped in Port Douglas and Cairns and we could not supply it. One difficulty is getting the fruit to the port of shipment. Our accommodation is too small; we have no facilities for bringing the fruit down the rivers. We would have to have the fruit accumulating here, waiting for the direct steamer, several days beforehand. If we had to do that to fill up the steamers here we might just as well have it on board the steamers. We would only save two days by the direct steamer. I believe that the fruit is better in the steamer than on the wharf of the port of starting. I believe there is no serious loss by stoppage at Townsville and other places, because there is no handling or transhipment. They are better five or six days extra on the voyage than in the store house. That shows that other people think there is something in the trade and that this company does not see it. The freight from this place and Cairns must be over £150 a week on bananas only. You could easily find that out from Mr. Walsh here.

821. Would more land be put under cultivation if there were better facilities for taking the fruit to the other colonies? Yes; much more land would be cultivated in a very short time. We have a slight advantage over Fiji, having a large bunch. In Fiji they protect the industry, and carefully handle the fruit. There is not much done in sugar and coffee here. Something ought to be done in reference to this pillage of fruit.

JOHN TREZISE examined:

J. Trezise.

12 Jan., 1889.

822. *By the Chairman:* You are a farmer and selector in this district? Yes.

823. How long have you been here? Nine years.

824. What is the extent of your selection? 160 acres.

825. Is it a homestead or a conditional purchase? A homestead.

826. How much of it have you cultivated? I have cultivated about sixty acres of it, but it is mostly out of cultivation now, as it does not pay.

827. What have you principally grown? Oranges. I grew a good many bananas, but could not make them pay; also maize and oats.

828. What was your average crop per acre of maize? For the first two years, forty bushels; but the grass got bad in the fields and I could not keep it clean, and the yield fell to twenty-five bushels to the acre.

829. Why did you not keep the land clear of grass? I could not make it pay to do so.

830. What price did you get for your maize? About £7 per ton.

831. Then you are now growing oranges only? Oranges and oats. I have about six or seven acres of oats this year.

832. What is your return from the oats? If I get a good season about two tons to the acre, or with a middling season one and a-half tons to the acre.

833. Have you a good market for it? Yes.

834. With regard to the oranges, how many young trees have you? About 500.

835. What is your average return from them? Last year I got about 4,000 dozen, but of course they are not all bearing. Some of them are young trees. About 300 are bearing.

836. What do you get per dozen for them? I take mine to Herberton and get 2s. and 2s. 6d. per dozen for them. I took about half of them to Herberton.

837. What labour do you employ in cultivation? Myself and the boys. You can get nothing but Chinese here, and we have some difficulty in getting them.

838. Practically you work your homestead by yourself and family? Yes.

839. How does the climate affect your health? The climate is very good as far as we are concerned.

840. And you are able to do your work on your farm without any bad effects? Yes, and my children also.

841. Then practically you are satisfied with the district, the climate, and the results of your operations? Yes, with the oranges.

842. You said you grew bananas? Yes, I did, but they did not pay on account of bad shipment—that is, principally by being knocked about in shipment. Sometimes I got good returns, but sometimes I would be in debt by the shipment. Last shipment I was 5s. in debt.

843. Have you shipped any oranges? Yes; by the "Burdekin."

844. Were they shipped properly? Yes; I had no complaints. They landed in good condition. I have sent them by the company's boats to Townsville, and when they got there the cases were half empty. The "Burdekin" does not belong to the company, but to Aplin, Brown and Co. I sent four dozen mangoes to Townsville. They arrived in good condition.

845. Have you mango trees on your selection? Yes, about forty trees, but I do not like them. They don't stand much handling. If you can't sell them as soon as they ripen you have to throw them away.

846. From your nine years' experience do you consider this district favourable for a European population? Yes; I do.

847. Suppose your farm had been devoted to sugar-cane growing, would you and your family have carried on the work? I don't think so. If we had had the whole of our cultivated land under cane, I would have had to get more labour. But the stumps are nearly all rotted out now and I can plough and harrow, and can therefore do much more work than with the hoe. In a very few more years all the stumps will be out.

848. *By Mr. King:* Where is your selection? It is on a tributary of the Mowbray, above Montgomerie, on Spring Creek.

849. Are you above Allan Gray? Yes.

850. Have you tried other crops—tobacco? No; a good many people have tried tobacco, but it has been a failure. A man named Turner had an acre under tobacco, and it did not succeed.

851. How

851. How was that? I do not know; I saw the crop once and it looked very well. He did not try any more, as he said he could not make it pay, because it required too much hand labour. J. Trezise.
12 Jan., 1889.
852. *By the Chairman:* Have you anything that you can suggest by which the fruit trade can in any way be assisted? Yes; it could be assisted a great deal if we could get steamers properly fitted up so as to carry bananas and all fruit, after being put on board here carefully enough, to prevent half of the shipment being destroyed before it reached its destination. It is a great loss to Port Douglas the way fruit is shipped. You may send fruit to Brisbane, and out of ten cases you will have only five left.
853. How many of your family are engaged in garden work? One boy of thirteen years and two littler boys aged ten and eleven years. We do not require a great deal of labour.
854. If there was an experimental farm in this district where tropical articles of commercial value that could be grown on your selection were shown to you and their cultivation explained, would it be of any benefit to you? Yes; it would be a great advantage to all the selectors in this district, and especially to the young sons who are growing up. We cannot afford to experiment ourselves, and if anything was tried on that experimental farm and shown that it would prove successful, then we would go in for it and plant it.
855. Are your orange trees seedlings or worked trees? The first trees were all worked trees.
856. Which do you consider the best? I can hardly tell you, because the seedlings take such a long time to bear properly. My seedlings are only six years old, and they are not bearing properly yet. But they are all five trees. They do not bear properly till they are eight or nine years old.
857. Do you find any of your worked trees dying? No; I have not lost one yet.
858. Are they grafted on orange or lemon stock? Mostly on lemon; a few on orange stock.
859. How do Hartmann's trees do here? No better than the lemon stock tree, and I hardly think so well. I see no difference in them, and hardly think the orange stock so good as the lemon stock. They do not grow so quickly.
860. As far as tropical agriculture in this district is concerned—outside of sugar-cane—there is no reason to doubt that Europeans could very well do it? Yes.
861. You mentioned that selectors could make a good living? Yes; I have done well. A man must work, he must not lie down. I have six to keep besides myself.
862. *By Mr. King:* Have not a good many homestead selectors given it up? Not out about us. But on the Mossman and Daintree a good many have given up.
863. *By the Chairman:* Have you had any reason assigned why they gave it up? No.
864. Is the land good? Yes; the people went in for corn-growing at a time when it was bringing from 6s. to 7s. a bushel; but when it came down to 3s. 6d. it would not pay, and that caused a good many homestead selectors to give it up. The oranges have kept me; I have made more out of them.
865. *By Mr. King:* Do they suffer much from the flying foxes here? Yes; the soft fruit suffers, but we do not grow much of it. We can't grow peaches here. I have never seen them take oranges here.

ERNEST EOLINGTON examined:

866. *By the Chairman:* You are Police Magistrate and Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages at Port Douglas? Yes. E. Eglington.
12 Jan., 1889.
867. Do you keep complete returns of the Port Douglas district? The only returns we have are those showing certificate of death, which is forwarded to the Registrar-General. The particulars of death are not kept here. There are also the number of deaths that occurred in the district, and the number of births. We have nothing to do with marriages, only deaths and births. I can give you the total number of deaths, but not any particulars as to the cause of death. There is no record of it.
868. What is the general health of the residents of Port Douglas district? Since I have been here, that is for the past seven months, it has been very good. There is rather more fever here than away from the coast, but that is common to all northern ports. The birth-rate is far in excess of the death-rate. The births in 1888 were 40 and the deaths only 17.
869. Are you also Inspector of Polynesians? Yes.
870. Are there many employed in this district? When I came here there were no boys under agreement in the district. Now there are boys at work under the agreement prescribed by the Act. There were twenty-six boys sent to Bribri Plantation. Their agreement expired on 31st December, 1887. I found when I came here that these boys were employed throughout the district doing odd jobs for the selectors, and some of them were working for Chinese cutting scrub. The Chinese would contract for clearing and burning off land, and would again sublet the contract to kanakas, who would clear the scrub for them.
871. Were the boys paid their wages when they left Bribri? No; the boys were not paid for a considerable arrears of wages due to them, some of them being due from £14 to £21. The boys, not having been paid, decline to leave the district, and they think that by going away they forfeit their chance. I have tried to advise them to go to other districts, or even to enter into fresh agreements here with those willing to employ them; but in every case they have objected to it, and say "first me must be paid for Bribri, and then me will see what me will do." I reported the matter to the officer in charge of the department at Brisbane, and called his attention to the way the boys were employed, and gave him my opinion that such employment was not in accordance with the Act, and was illegal unless on agreement. I thought that under the special circumstances of those boys waiting to be paid their wages, it was better that they should take any employment than that they should live about town and get into bad ways and drink. That state of things was in existence when I came here. The boys were employed about the town, and in several instances were employed in occupations that I did not approve of, but I did not feel justified in taking action against any one person, unless I did so against the others who had good employment for the boys on selections. I particularly object to their taking any occupation in a public-house; still I can't see my way to stop it altogether. There are boys holding exemption tickets in the district, and they have more liberty.
872. *By Mr. King:* Is there any prospect of the Bribri boys being paid? The plantation is in liquidation, and until it is sold I do not see any prospect of the boys being paid. The plantation was advertised for sale, but I don't know when it will be sold. The boys are still unpaid, even though the insolvent has got

E. Eglington. got his certificate. All I can do is to communicate with the office below. The department instructed me to try to get the boys to Cairns, Ingham, or Geraldton. There is no law by which I can force the boys to go. The boys say "We not go till we get wages Bribri." They take contract work, and earn wages here. They will not remain very long in one employment.

873. *By the Chairman*: Are the Polynesians healthy who are here? Yes; but they get into bad habits in town.

874. Are they accompanied by their wives? Very few of them.

875. As a rule you consider the district quite healthy for Europeans? I do; I have not been here during a wet season, which is the most unhealthy time of the year. I have had a slight attack of fever since I have been here, but it was not very severe.

DAVID PETER THOMAS tendered the following evidence:

D. P. Thomas. 876. *By the Chairman*: You are a merchant in Port Douglas? Yes.

877. *By Mr. King*: Do you own land in the district? I have land that has been transferred to me but has not yet been registered.

878. How much? About five hundred acres.

879. Where is it situated? On the Mossman River and Saltwater Creek. I also own 1,280 acres on the Johnstone River.

880. Have you been cultivating any of the land in this district? A large portion has been cultivated—about 200 acres.

881. Is it under cultivation now? Only a portion of it. We had a bailiff on the 1,280 acres on the Johnstone River until just lately. The land is now as it were freehold. The land here has about forty acres under fruit, such as oranges, peaches, bananas, lemons, limes, and various other fruits.

882. Have you made any attempt to grow any other tropical product, such as tobacco, coffee, indigo, and cocoa? No.

883. Just state what you want to give in evidence with regard to the land on the Johnstone River? I would be sorry to see the country swarmed with black labour; but really I am under the impression that with the present labour available it would be impossible to work the sugar industry, or any other industry in the district—that is, with white labour. When I say white labour I mean anything else but coloured labour. White labour is not reliable.

884. *By the Chairman*: When you say "any other industry" would you apply that to farming generally in this district? I mean that to refer to agricultural industries—to anything connected with farming. I really believe it is impossible for a white man to do a fair day's work on a fair day's wage in the scrub in northern Queensland or in this district.

885. Would you apply your remark to the homestead selector who had taken land up and managed it with his wife and family? The homestead selector who tried to do so would work under tremendous difficulties, and would do much better if he had coloured labour to aid him. It would not pay him to employ white labour. That is my opinion of the North from my own experience. I have been twenty-two years north of Brisbane, and for fourteen years in this district and in the North. My opinion is that no white man can work in the scrub or clear land or work so as to do half the work that a kanaka can do. Then there is another matter, and that is the uncertainty of keeping those men at work. A rush may break out, and those unfortunate fellows who have white men in their employ will be left without a single soul as all the men will be off to the diggings—he will be left just during his crushing, and he will have his crops rot before he can reap any benefit from them. There is no reliance to be placed on white labour in this district.

886. Would not the argument about the discovery of a goldfield causing many men to leave their employment apply to large centres of population all over the world? That is different from an agricultural district. I am not an advocate for black labour, but an advocate for cheap labour. If you ask a man to work for you for a year you have to pay him £3 or £4 a week. He has to be fed, and it will cost £3 or £4 a week to feed him and pay his wages. A man will work when he likes or not, just as he pleases. If a diggings broke out no doubt he would clear out and leave his employer in the lurch.

887. *By Mr. King*: Have you cleared the land or done anything on the Johnstone River? Yes; we have part of it under crop. We cleared enough of it to enable us to get our certificate of fulfilment of conditions, but then we determined to bailiff it and hold it until more favourable times return so as to enable us to put it under cultivation.

888. *By the Chairman*: On what work you did you got your certificate of fulfilment of conditions? Yes. We have paid our nine years' rent, and up to the present we are not reaping a penny benefit out of it.

889. *By Mr. King*: Have you put any crops in it yet? Yes.

890. What crops did you put in? I really can't say. I have not seen the land yet. I took up the land for the purpose of starting a sugar plantation on it, and when I found that labour was so very hard to get I thought it best to secure it as a freehold and hold it.

891. *By the Chairman*: Did you select the Johnstone River land yourself, or was it selected for you? I paid an agent to select it. I never saw the land, but before I put an axe into it I received an offer of £3 an acre for it.

892. Even the selection of the land has been a good speculation? It may turn out to be. At present I might not get cost price for it.

893. Are you of opinion that as far as the Port Douglas district is concerned tropical agriculture cannot be carried on by a European population? I am sure it cannot be done by white labour—that is, at the present rate of wages.

894. But do you not make an exception in such a case as the homestead selection taken up by Mr. Montgomerie? I will explain myself as far as Mr. Montgomerie is concerned. Montgomerie and Robbins took up the land, and are the owners of the selection. They having taken the land, leased it for four or five years to Chinamen to clear it off, and put it under cultivation. They cleared a small portion themselves, just about the site of the homestead—that they cultivated and planted. The rest was all done by leasing it to the Chinamen. It would not have paid them to employ white men to do it.

895. But both Montgomerie and Robbins do the work now? That I doubt. At present it is let to Chinamen.

896. We

896. We have their assurance that they do it: that they keep clean all the orchard round their house; D. P. Thomas. and they showed us the land that they had just ploughed, and were just waiting for the rain to put oats in. They assured us that they were capable of doing it, and that any other white man was capable of doing it? At the same time, the 160 acres is not attended to by them; they do not do the work on the whole of it. 12 Jan., 1889.

897. Are you in favour of coloured labour being employed in other agricultural industries in the district apart from the cane-field? I would be. I will explain. I would be in favour of every homestead selector being allowed cheap labour as well as the conditional selector.

898. You have not employed any coloured labour yourself? I have never employed on any plantation, or on any selection, a coloured man, nor did I ever employ a Chinaman in any work connected with our business.

899. In advocating the extension of cheap coloured labour to general agriculture, do you do so in the interests of the white population? Whatever I have said I have said—as I always do—in the interests of the white population. I have had a long experience in the North, and I consider that it is absolutely necessary that we should have cheap labour to work our lands at a profit.

MONDAY, 14 JANUARY, 1889.

CAIRNS DISTRICT.
(At The Pyramid Plantation.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq., M.L.A.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., CHAIRMAN.

WILLIAM LANGDON examined:

900. *By the Chairman:* You are manager of the Pyramid Plantation? Yes.

901. How long have you been manager? About twenty months.

902. Had you previous experience in sugar plantations? Yes.

903. For how long? I was manager of Mourilyan Plantation for four years; I was manager of Innisfail; and have had general experience independent of that.

904. What is the extent of this plantation? There are about 3,400 acres. I am not quite sure as to the exact extent.

905. Who were the original proprietors? I cannot say exactly; I suppose Lorian and Co.

906. Who are the nominal owners now? The Bank of Australasia.

907. *By Mr. King:* What capital has been expended on this plantation? Do you mean since I've been here?

908. No; altogether? I believe about £130,000. I believe that it was the original company that spent the money.

909. What area have you under cane now? About 670 acres.

910. How many acres did you crush last year? About 547 acres.

911. What amount of sugar did you make? About 900 tons.

912. Was that white sugar? No; just the ordinary product of a mill of this sort. There would be perhaps, 65 or 70 per cent. of white sugar—perhaps 70 per cent.

913. What do you do with the molasses? We work it into low-class sugar as far as we can go.

914. *By Mr. Cowley:* What do you do with the residue? It is of no value. It might be of value to a distillery, but not to us. We throw it away.

915. *By Mr. King:* How much do you throw away? I can hardly tell, because our low-class sugar is not yet worked up. We have 80 tons of low sugar in the mill.

916. *By Mr. Cowley:* You mean that you have not centrifuged your low-class sugar yet, and can't tell what molasses you will have? Yes.

917. Do you use it as horse feed at all? Yes.

918. Is there any sale for it in the district? None whatever.

919. *By Mr. King:* What labour have you on the Plantation? We have now 212 kanakas, about 24 Japanese, and about 25 Europeans.

920. *By Mr. Cowley:* What do your Europeans include? They include everybody—bullock-drivers, horse-drivers, gangers, and labourers, and we have a sugar boiler. Besides those we have mechanics, fitters, engineers, carpenters, and men in the mill.

921. *By Mr. King:* What wages do the Europeans get? Mechanics, get 50s. a week, at first, with rations and lodgings. In cases where a man has a family he is allowed double rations. Horsemen, bullock-drivers, and draymen get from 35s. to £2 a week and rations and lodgings.

922. Do you have more Europeans employed during the crushing season? Yes. Last season we had up to sixty, I think.

923. What are the wages of the Japanese? An ordinary field labourer gets £1 9s. 2d. a month.

924. And Polynesians, do they get £6 a year? No, some of them get £8 and £9, but I think they will average somewhere about £8.

925. *By Mr. Cowley:* Is that for indentured boys? Yes.

926. Have you any free boys? Yes, one.

927. What wages do you pay him? 12s. a week.

W. Langdon.

14 Jan., 1889.

928. *By*

W. Langdon. 928. *By Mr. King* : What do you consider the best class of labour in the field? The kanaka, no doubt.

929. Are they better than the Javanese? Yes.

14 Jan., 1889. 930. Have you had any Europeans employed on the field? Not on this plantation, but I have had them in other places.

931. *By Mr. Cowley* : Ploughing and harrowing? Oh, yes, of course I have had them ploughing and harrowing on this plantation.

932. *By Mr. King* : When the plantation is sufficiently old—when it is all stumped—to work with the plough and harrow all over the plantation, do you think you will be able to employ a larger proportion of European labour to get much of the field work done? Yes, I think so, because there will be more plough and harrow work and cultivation generally.

933. What is the proportion of acres to one hand in this field labour as it is carried on now? How many acres do you calculate that one boy will work? It would have a lot to do with the season. In regard to the past and present season it would be very hard to tell, because I do not think that one boy could keep one acre clean, but as a rule from two and a half to three acres to the boy.

934. How many acres do you think that a white man would be able to work, if the land was in such a condition that it could be worked with a horse and plough? Do you mean if the land was cleared and stumped?

935. Yes, so that you could use horse labour? I should not like to say. It would be a very hard matter to say. My experience has been confined during the past season to a man from Mackay, who brought up three teams of his own, and he said that on land such as this he could not make wages anything like what he got in Mackay. So if he could not tell, I'm sure I could not.

936. Do you not think that one man with a horse and implements could work twenty acres through the season? I do not think so. He might do it in Mackay where the place has been under cultivation so long, and where in the first place the growth is not so rapid as it is here. It is quite a different place altogether.

937. *By Mr. Cowley* : Even suppose that you had the land under the plough, could a white man do the work from the time of planting? He could not.

938. From your experience in the North, would he not, after the land had been scarified, have to hoe round the cane? Of course. I have two splendid scarifiers, but they do not do the work as effectively as the hand hoe. If you use the scarifier here you can't get round the plant, and must have hand labour to follow and work round the plant.

939. Do you trash the cane here? We have never had a chance to trash. There are two or three reasons why I would do it. It ripens the cane, and facilitates the means of cutting it and saves it for another.

940. What do you mean by saying that you never had a chance to trash? We have never had the labour to spare.

941. *By Mr. King* : Do you know what it cost for clearing this land? No I do not; but I know what it cost to clear land similar to this.

942. What did it cost? It cost from £6 to £7 10s. per acre to fall it and burn it off, without taking the stumps out. For that the contractor must fall all the scrub and timber and clear it off up to a certain size. It is generally supposed that they are allowed to let lie on the field timber exceeding from 8 to 10 inches through. All under that must be burnt off.

943. *By Mr. Cowley* : And does that cost £6 an acre? I have paid up to £8 on the Jobstone River, and even up to £8 10s.

944. *By Mr. King* : What would it cost to stump it? Well, there is a case in point that I heard of in the Cardwell Court in which a few acres of land had cost about £33 an acre to stump.

945. *By Mr. Cowley* : Have you experienced any difficulty in getting labour to work the plantation? Yes. Of course the difficulty now is to get vessels to go round to the islands. We tried to get a vessel, and the owners wanted £30 a head.

946. What have you paid? We have paid up to £25. That is independent of other charges for importing the men. From £23 to £25.

947. And the capitation fee in addition? Yes.

948. What is that now? £2.

949. *By Mr. King* : How do the Polynesians keep their health on the plantation;—do you find any unusual mortality? No, I find them exceedingly healthy.

950. *By Mr. Cowley* : Do you pay the boys their wages every six months? We pay the money to the Government every six months, but the boys do not get their money until the expiration of their time.

951. You mean to say that you pay the Polynesian Protector the money? Yes.

952. What does he do with the money? I suppose he puts it into the bank. I do not know what he does positively.

953. Do you know if the boys get interest on it at the end of the three years? I do not think so.

954. *By Mr. King* : What is the nature of the complaints from which the kanakas suffer; have you had any deaths on the plantation? I have had only two deaths since I came here about twenty months ago, and one of these deaths was a boy I laid an objection against taking.

955. When he was landed from the ship? Yes.

956. *By Mr. Cowley* : What was the nature of your objection? The Polynesian Inspector was out here some time previous to the last shipment of boys, and he found fault with two boys who appeared to have skin disease, and I told him that those boys had been passed by himself and allowed to land; and I told him that they should never have been allowed to land. Then when the last lot of boys arrived I went to town myself and went on board the ship with him and some officers, and saw the boys passed round. I saw two or three who had worked with me before. I noticed one boy especially who, when at Mourilyan with me, had never done a day's work. I asked that boy to turn up his trousers and he showed a very bad sore on his shin. That boy was sent to the hospital at Cairns.

957. Did you refuse to take the boy when you saw the wound? No, but I refused the two others. I did not object to this boy very much because I thought the wound might heal up. The other two are in our hospital now and have never done a day's work since they landed.

958. *By Mr. King* : Did you object to them? Yes, but the Polynesian Inspector said he had nothing to do with me—that he only dealt with the bank.

959. *By*

959. *By Mr. Cowley*: But you said that one boy died? That was of a previous lot of boys, though passed by this same Polynesian Inspector. W. Langdon.
960. *By Mr. King*: What was the nature of the complaint that you made against the boys who are now in the hospital? I could not tell you exactly, except that they were very sick, and one had a large ulcer on his skin. They are still in the hospital and have never done a day's work on the plantation. 14 Jan., 1889.
961. *By the Chairman*: Who is the Polynesian Inspector in this district? Major Fanning.
962. Was he at Port Douglas before he came here? Yes.
963. *By Mr. Cowley*: When you say that a boy was sent to the hospital with a sore leg was that done at your expense or at the expense of the ship? At the expense of the ship, but he would have been passed if I had not objected.
964. Have you applied to have those boys returned to the islands? I have written to Major Fanning to that effect, but have had no reply.
965. How long ago? I can't say, but can show by my letter book. It will be about two months ago.
966. *By the Chairman*: Were the Javanese you have indentured by yourself? No; they were indentured by the Pyramid Sugar Company.
967. Has the experiment of employing them proved a success? Not here.
968. Would you be inclined to give them an extension of their time? In a few cases I would; that is to say, there are a few I would re-engage, but the majority of them I would not.
969. You would not object to take another shipment of Javanese? That is another matter. I have had some very good shipments, but they are not so good as the kanakas. I would take Javanese in preference to Chinese or Cingalese, if the labour was so scarce that we could get no kanakas.
970. Have you ever employed white labour in the field hoeing, the same as the kanakas we saw this morning? Not here, but in other places.
971. What has been the result? They were an utter failure, as far as field work is concerned.
972. What was the cause of failure? I believe the climate principally. Some men came from the Clarence and entered into a contract for cutting cane, but they did not fulfil their contract. That is a fact within my own knowledge. This happened here.
973. *By Mr. Cowley*: How many men were there in a gang? Eight in a gang.
974. What did you offer them per ton? 2s. 8d.
975. Was that to cut and load? To cut only.
976. What was your average weight of cane to the acre? Well, about 26 tons per acre of cane.
977. Was this on hilly land or on flat land? On hilly land.
978. Was it exposed to the breeze? Yes.
979. Did they make it pay? Did they earn good wages? They never gave it a fair trial; they went and tried it for an hour or two and then knocked off.
980. Why? I think it was too hot for them.
981. What time of the year was it? About September, the latter end of the month.
982. *By the Chairman*: Have you employed any white men at all on the plantations in field work—newly arrived emigrants, for example? No, not here. I have tried them in other places.
983. With what result? Well, the result was very bad. Nearly all, with two or three exceptions, came up and paid their expenses—that is, they refunded the expense that the company was put to in bringing them out—and got their agreements cancelled.
984. But did the men attempt to work in the field? Oh yes; they attempted to. You will find that this is correct when you get to Mourilyan.
985. Then it was not from any want of strength or health that they declined to do the work; it was simply climatic reasons? Yes. Of course, on the Johnstone River there was a great deal of sickness and fever. These men were not laid up with fever, but they were weakened by it.
986. Then, as far as the Pyramid plantation is concerned, it has always been worked, since you have been here, with coloured labour? Yes, Chinese principally. It was only last month that we had the last shipment of kanakas. The oldest of our kanaka boys has only been seven months on the plantation.
987. Was the employment of Chinese a success? No, it can never be a success with the high price we have to pay them. If you put Chinese on a contract they will work well enough to earn a living for themselves, and if they earn that they do not care about working any more. They will carry out their contract, simply because they have to. We make a provision that they must do it or suffer a loss.
988. Then you would not employ Chinese by day labour? No, unless we had no other labour to take their place I would never dream of it.
989. *By Mr. King*: What wages did the Chinese get who were employed here? Twenty-six shillings a week, and they had to find themselves.
990. *By Mr. Cowley*: When you were speaking about the men whom you had working in the field on the Johnstone River, were you manager of Mourilyan plantation at the time? Yes; and they were working under my orders.
991. Does a doctor from town regularly attend your kanakas up here? Yes, for which we pay him £100 a year.
992. Does the doctor see those two sick boys regularly? Oh, yes.
993. Does he condemn them as being unfit for work? He says that one is fit to go to work a little; in fact, that he would be better to do a little work, and we do turn him out sometimes. The other is completely laid up. The doctor says he never should have been passed, though the doctor himself passed him. The doctor says it was a mistake passing him.
994. Have you had many cases of this description in your experience? Never before. I think that in all cases, either the manager of a plantation or his representative should always be present when boys are being taken off the ships to see what class of boys they are getting, and it is not likely he is going to pass two or three boys who are totally unfit to be landed from the ship, especially considering the cost of bringing them here.
995. You said that you had to incur an expense at the rate of £25 a head for those boys, independent of the capitation fee. Is that correct? Yes; and there is a lodgment of £6 for their return passage at the end of their time on which we lose interest.
996. Then these boys have been here six months and found at your cost? No; they were "Roderick Dhu" boys, and they have been here six months this month. 997. Since

- W. Langdon. 997. Since their arrival they have been fed at the cost of the estate? Yes.
 998. And you pay wages to those men just the same as if they were at work? Yes; they get the same food, tobacco, soap, clothes, and wages.
 14 Jan., 1889. 999. Does the Polynesian Protector come to the estate to receive the money, or do you send it to him? I send him a cheque, he does not pay the money on the plantation.
 1000. At the expiration of the three years do they get paid on the plantation or do they go to town to get their money? They go to town.
 1001. Do the boys object to that? They object to it strongly. So much so, that they came to me and asked leave to go and see "The Government," as they call him. I said no, that I would explain as much as I could to them. But notwithstanding that, two of them went to town and asked why they were not being paid.
 1002. Does this give you any trouble in the management of these men? Yes, a great deal. Of course they are discontented and go to work very sullenly at times, and that is not to be wondered at.
 1003. You have always sent a cheque to the Polynesian Protector regularly every six months since you have been here; there has been no default? Yes; there has been no default.
 1004. What is the annual expenditure of this plantation? Last year it was very heavy, on account of our not having any kanaka labour. We were thrown into about £22,000 expenditure last year. A little more than that.
 1005. Does that include permanent improvements? It included about £2,000 for permanent improvements.
 1006. Is the whole of this money, or the bulk of it, circulated in the district? A great deal of it is—in fact, we have been paying from £1,500 to £2,000 a month, and the Chinese take the great bulk of it, and the rest has been spent in the district. Our rations came to about £300 a month. Our European wages came to something over £200 a month, and our Javanese to about £35 a month. Then there are incidental and general expenses that I could not enumerate now. Of course the kanaka's rations stand in with the others, the whole cost for rations being, as I have said, £300 a month. The wages of the kanakas average from £7 10s. to £8 a year, and as there are 212 kanakas, that is about £1,700 a year, or about £140 a month.
 1007. *By the Chairman*: When you say that a great deal of this £2,000 per month expenditure goes into the hands of the Chinese, how does it go into their hands? It did so, but it does not do so now. That was when I had no kanakas. Suppose that you take off 300 tons of cane a week. That is 3s. 6d. a ton to start with for cutting and loading. Then you pay men in the mill 26s. a week, and then you have to pay wages to men working the horses and arays. I had Europeans last year, and because I would not raise their wages above £1 2s. 6d., which they are getting, every man jack went out.
 1608. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did you get any others? Yes, Chinese.
 1009. Is that a rare occurrence? It happened twice last crushing season that the white men struck for higher wages.
 1010. *By Mr. King*: Where is the machinery brought from that you manufacture with? Most of it was made in England.
 1011. Have you any that is colonial made? Oh yes, a set of clarifiers, from Messrs. Walker and Co., Maryborough.
 1012. Do you have to make repairs and additions to your machinery every year? Yes, every year.
 1013. I suppose these repairs are made by Queensland manufacturers? In all cases the repairs are made of Queensland material by Queensland mechanics, unless it is very important, such as a cheek piece.
 1014. How much do you spend in your annual over-haul, after you stop crushing, so as to put the mill and machinery into proper repair? That would be very hard to say.
 1015. How many hundreds of pounds does it take? In the first place, we will start with the labour. There is an engineer, two fitters, and a labourer—that is what we have at present. It will take those men about fourteen weeks to complete the work.
 1016. You have an overhaul every year. Can you tell me how much the annual overhaul of this sugar plantation will come to on an average? For last year I could tell you. This year we have not commenced to overhaul, and I can't say what it will be because I have not gone into it. Suppose it wanted a new boiler or anything like that.
 1017. Take last year, then? Well, I think the annual outlay will cost about £500 on an average.
 1018. *By Mr. Cowley*: How many mechanics do you keep all the year round? A blacksmith, two carpenters, an engineer, and a fitter; that is, five all the year round.
 1019. Do you know if the kanakas spend the whole of their wages in the district, or do they take it home with them? They do not get paid here; in the other districts they generally spend it in the district.
 1020. Then, independent of the money that you send away for stores, the bulk of your annual expenditure is circulated in the district? Yes.
 1021. *By Mr. King*: Have you to cart your sugar to town to ship? There is Swallow's Wharf which we use, or we take it to Redbank.
 1022. What is the cost of cartage?—I suppose you employ carriers to do that? No, we employ our own men, and the cost is about 9s. per ton, with our own teams.
 1023. *By Mr. Cowley*: These men bring back your own stores? Yes.
 1024. *By Mr. King*: What kind of seasons have the two last been for sugar in this district? 1887 was a fair season; it was not good. This last season has been a very bad one—the worst I ever saw in Queensland.
 1025. *By the Chairman*: You say that £130,000 has been invested in this estate before you came to it? That is what I have been told. I am not certain.
 1026. Is the estate paying the cost of its annual outlay and the interest on the capital invested? No.
 1027. Would the land at present under cultivation, supposing you had an ordinary yield of sugar, pay? Yes; if we had kanaka labour;—to carry out the work satisfactorily, we would want 250 kanakas on the place. Then it would, I daresay, pay expenses, no more.
 1028. *By Mr. King*: Would it pay the interest on capital also? I do not think so.
 1029. *By the Chairman*: Does the £130,000 represent the whole of the cleared land and the buildings on the land, the mill, and all machinery? Yes.

1030. Does it include the whole plant? No, it does not include the whole of it, because I have since added portions of new machinery, such as clarifiers, costing about £3,000, since I came here. W. Langdon.
1031. *By Mr. Cowley*: When you say the estate would not pay interest and expenses, you mean the interest on the £130,000 previously expended? Of course. 14 Jan., 1889.
1032. Then you think that if the plantation was now taken at a fair valuation it would pay working expenses and interest with kanaka labour? Yes; if sugar was to remain at its present price—nothing under that would pay. That is, as you say, if the place was taken at a fair valuation.
1033. *By the Chairman*: According to the experience you have had here, the cause of the present depression in the sugar industry on this estate arises from the labour question and the low price of sugar combined? Yes; of course we may have had seasons, but that has nothing to do with it.
1034. *By Mr. King*: The last was a bad season, but you got 1½ tons to the acre; what would it be in a good season? In a good season an area like this should give a return of 2½ tons to the acre.
1035. *By Mr. Cowley*: You arrive at that conclusion from your past experience? Yes.
1036. Have you had any large area that has given as large a yield? Yes.
1037. Could you from your memory tell us the area? Yes; about 400 acres.
1038. What did that give you on an average? About two and a-half tons.
1039. Was that scrub land of a similar description to this? Yes; but it has never done it since.
1040. Have you had any disease in the cane? Yes.
1041. Can you tell us the nature of the disease? The grub.
1042. Did the grub destroy any quantity of cane, or did it only retard the growth? It destroyed a large area of cane.
1043. Did it destroy all kinds alike, or only one particular variety? It took all cane, more especially in one block, where there were a lot of varieties planted. It treated them all alike.
1044. About what season of the year does the grub show itself first? About February or March.
1045. Is it worst in any particular kind of soil, or is it equally bad in all soils? It treats all soil alike on the Johnstone River, and here it is just the same.
1046. Have you done anything to try to prevent the grub attacking the cane, or to eradicate it? Yes. Whenever I see the cane affected by the grub I run a ring round it and destroy all the cane in the ring, and replant it.
1047. Does that prevent it spreading? Does that prevent its ravages for that year? Yes. We may find others in other parts of the field, but never to any great extent. I do not know what it may be this season.
1048. Does it come in virgin soil? Yes.
1049. Do you find that cultivation has any deterrent effect? Ploughed land is not so much affected, and the more the land is agitated the less it is troubled with the grub.
1050. Then your experience is that the grub is worse on uncultivated land than on ploughed land? Yes. There is a reason for that, and it is because the old timber gets destroyed after a while, and there is no more living for the grub, and they must go to the next best thing, and that is cane.
1051. Have you noticed if the birds prey on this grub? Yes. I have noticed that after the plough has turned the land over the birds have followed and picked up the grubs.
1052. When the grubs are exposed to the air do you find that the birds eat them? Yes; I noticed that in Mackay.
1053. What is the best kind of bird? I have not noticed the birds destroy this grub here.
1054. Does that arise from the scarcity of birds, or do you not have them here? We do not have them here.
1055. Could you tell me about the amount of your yearly loss from grubs—this year or last year? I could not give you the acreage, because the field is very much affected.
1056. Do you find them amongst the ratoons? Yes; worse in the ratoons.
1057. Does the grub affect the second crops? Well, this is the second season, and I can't tell you.
1058. Do they destroy the root? Yes; they do, and it is necessary to re-plant. The grub destroys the stool of the cane altogether.
1059. Are the grubs showing this season? No; not yet; it is rather early.
1060. Have you tried any remedy for preventing them? I have not tried any preventive—I have only tried extermination. I have employed Chinamen to follow the plough and pick the grubs up.
1061. Do you find that they increase every year? Well, last year was the first time I had them here.
1062. Have you employed any aboriginals here? None; and I have never tried to induce them to work.
1063. Have they committed any depredations here? Yes.
1064. In what shape? In firing the cane chiefly, and they have also speared some stock.
1065. Has there been any loss in human life through the aboriginals? Not since I have been here.
1066. Can you estimate the damage they did to your cane last year? I should think £300 or £400 worth fully.
1067. Were any steps taken by the authorities to stop it? The troopers came out. I reported the matter to the officer in charge of the native police, and he came out and went out round the district.
1068. *By the Chairman*: Do you find any objection raised on the part of Europeans to work side by side with kanakas on this plantation? They will not do it.
1069. Is the presence of the kanaka objectionable to the Europeans employed here? Last year I was short of Europeans and had to put on kanakas as drivers to drive the cane in, and when I did so the Europeans left. Then I put on all Chinese.
1070. *By Mr. King*: But do the Europeans object to the kanakas doing field work? No.
1071. The Europeans do not want to do that? They will not do it.
1072. *By the Chairman*: Then, if the kanakas were confined to field work the Europeans would not object? No; and that is my experience of other places besides this.
1073. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you think that if you lost your South Sea Islanders to-morrow you could carry on this estate profitably? No, of course not. We would be the same as last year, thousands of pounds out; and we would have to shut up. It is even now a question whether or not we will carry on on account of the great loss in the past.
1074. And the result or closing would be loss of employment to all the white people on the estate? Yes.
1075. *By Mr. King*: I suppose, Mr. Langdon, that if this plantation could be carried on for some years longer,

W. Langdon. longer, and brought under the plough, it would be worked very much more cheaply—that is, if you could get the stumps all out, the same as on a farm? Yes; but the working of an ordinary farm is so much different.

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1076. Could you do it with a lower percentage of coloured labour? Yes; if the land could be ploughed, harrowed, and generally cultivated we could do with much less labour. It would not be much easier or much more economical to work the plantation.

1077. *By Mr. Cowley*: Would it enable you to cut and carry the cane to the mill any cheaper? I don't think so.

1078. *By Mr. King*: But would it not enable you to employ machinery, such as the cane harvester which has just been invented? No; I have not heard anything about it.

1079. *By the Chairman*: Have you thought of any suggestions you can offer to the Commission by which the sugar industry can be benefited?—It is one of the objects of our inquiry to find out from gentlemen connected with sugar plantations if they can offer or make any suggestions by which the industry can be improved? It could be improved in many ways. To start with, the value of kanaka labour is very excessive—that is, the cost of importing it, and if it was made more reliable the plantations would be worked to better advantage;—if the cost could be reduced and the labour made more reliable, is my chief suggestion. The low price of sugar has nothing to do with it.

1080. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say "reliable."—I suppose you mean more easily obtained? Yes.

1081. It is very good when you have it? I do not think that kanaka labour will clash with Europeans. The more kanakas we employ the more Europeans we will want;—we can't carry on without them. During the crushing season most mills have from 30 to 60 Europeans employed. On many other estates there are many more employed, as many as from 90 to 100. There are places turn out 60, 70, or 80 tons of sugar a week. All those mills must have drivers, and these are all Europeans. I think that the restriction should be taken off kanakas as far as firearms are concerned. They do not use their firearms on the plantation. If they cannot get a gun here they will go elsewhere where they can get it. When the boys go home again they can purchase guns, and the money is lost which otherwise would be spent in Queensland.

1082. Do you think that because of the Government disallowing the boys to take back guns and ammunition there is a difficulty in obtaining boys to work? Yes; that is the great outcry.

1083. And yet you say they can obtain them from other places? Yes; they can do so easily.

1084. *By the Chairman*: Do you know that of your own knowledge? Yes; I could round 100 boys up now and they would tell you that.

1085. Where do they get them? On the islands, from French, German, and American traders. We always take particular notice that the boys who have rifles keep them. We take them from them on arrival and give them back to them when they go away.

1086. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you found the kanaka docile, tractable, and easily governed? Yes.

1087. Is it customary for a deceased kanaka's relatives and friends to obtain the money paid to the Polynesian inspector and due to their deceased friend at the time of his death? No. In no case have they been paid to my knowledge.

1088. Have you ever made application for this money on behalf of a deceased kanaka's friend? Yes.

1089. Was it refused? Yes.

1090. In the event of an islander dying and you owing him money can you pay it to his relatives, or must you pay it to the inspector? It must be paid to the inspector.

1091. Is that insisted on by the inspector? Yes.

1092. *By the Chairman*: Have you known a deceased kanaka's friend to make application for their relative's money? Yes.

1093. Did they complain because they could not obtain it? Yes; very much.

1094. Have you heard of other instances of a like character? Yes; but in no case have the friends of the deceased been paid.

1095. Then you think that the surviving relations regard that as an injustice? Yes.

1096. *By Mr. Cowley*: Has it ever led to evil consequences? Not to my knowledge.

TUESDAY, 15 JANUARY, 1889.

CAIRNS DISTRICT.

(At Hambleton Plantation.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

THOMAS FULTON SWALLOW examined:

T. F. Swallow. 1097. *By the Chairman*: What experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar here? I have been here for the last six years.

1098. Had you any previous experience before you came here? No.

1099. What is the name of this estate? Hambleton.

1100. What is the total area? About 6,000 acres.

1101. How much is under cultivation of sugar? 900 acres.

1102. How much sugar is produced in the course of a season? Well, last year, about 1,100 tons.

1103. How much molasses? I could not state that very well.

1104. What do you do with it? Send it to Melbourne, principally.

1105. Can

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1105. Can you give us an approximate idea of the amount of capital invested in this estate? I can give T.F.S. swallow.
it for the whole estate, including fruit and sugar—it is £180,000.
1106. What rate of interest does it return on the capital invested? It does not return interest on the 15 Jan., 1889.
investment.
1107. None at all? No.
1108. What! no return on the original outlay? That is what I mean.
1109. What is the annual expenditure? Last year it was £23,500.
1110. What is the labour employed on the estate chiefly? Kanakas, Chinese, and whites.
1111. Can you give us an idea of the number of each? Yes. We have now 176 kanakas, 29 Chinamen,
32 whites—seven or eight of these are on contract work but are included.
1112. What are the rates of wages paid to each class of labour? The lowest wage we pay at present is
42s. a week, and the men keep themselves. Those are white men.
1113. What are the rates of wages paid to kanakas, Javanese, and Chinese? We pay our kanakas
down to 15s. per week per head.
1114. As wages? No, actual cost. Their wages vary; some get £6, some £7, and others £8 a year.
1115. Can you strike an average? About £6 5s.
1116. What do the Javanese receive? From £1 a week to 23s. We give them £1 a week and provide
them with meat and they board themselves.
1117. And the Chinese? 25s. a week is the lowest, and they find themselves.
1118. What description of labour have you found most suitable for field work in the cultivation of sugar?
Kanakas.
1119. Have you tried the employment of European labour in field work? No. I have never had a
chance of getting them;—they have never offered themselves for that work. We tried to get some of
them to work on the field, but they said that it was work only fit for a nigger.
1120. Do you think that if the land was cleared and all the stumps taken out of it so that the plough
could work in between the rows of cane, that European labour could be more profitably employed on it
then? As far as we have ploughed this year it was all done by white men; we have had none of our
ploughing done by coloured labour.
1121. Then coloured labour on this plantation is strictly confined to field work amongst the cane? Yes.
We could not trouble to teach them anything else.
1122. If there was a constant stream of European labour pouring into Cairns, would that labour be suit-
able for you? No; judging from what we have seen of them, not at all suitable. They have employed
them on other plantations.
1123. How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each black labourer employed on the plantation? We
have 176 kanakas and have 900 acres under crops.
1124. Is that number sufficient to work the plantation? Oh, no.
1125. How many acres are allowed to each kanaka? Kanaka labour is very expensive up here, and we
are compelled to do the work with as few as we possibly can. By doing this the proprietors save money
in the first place but lose it in the second, because we do not get the quantity of sugar we would get if
we had more hands. But we are not prepared to go further into it as it is so expensive.
1126. By Mr. King: What area of land can one kanaka cultivate? That is rather difficult to say,
because the kanakas come here when the land is all planted.
1127. How many kanakas would keep the place going as it is at present and do it properly? How
many kanakas ought you to have? I should say 300.
1128. That is about three acres to the kanaka? Yes.
1129. By the Chairman: Now, having had experience with European labour, could you say how many
Europeans would be required to cultivate 900 acres of sugar? Well, I can only tell you what I know
about Europeans. I went into Cairns on one occasion to see some Europeans. But Mr. Loradin
of the Pyramid Plantation took them, and after trying them they all deserted with the exception of one.
1130. By Mr. King: Do you think that if your land was in a condition that you could use agricultural
machinery on it that Europeans would then be able to cultivate it? They could do some of it. But I do not
think they could do the trashing and hoeing, and there is always some banking to do after ploughing. White
men do all our ploughing now. We plough between all our rows of cane unless it is plant cane, and
that work is all done by white men.
1131. Do the blacks employed in field work suffer in health? No.
1132. Is the climate adapted for them? Yes.
1133. Do you think that field work would affect the health of Europeans if they were employed in it?
Yes; there is no doubt about it.
1134. How? It affects our men here—our overseers—who are accustomed to it.
1135. In what way do they suffer? They complain of fever.
1136. What is the cost per acre of clearing and burning off in the scrub land here? It would average
about £3 10s. per acre here.
1137. Is that by contract or by day labour? By contract. The burning off up here is an additional
expense. It might cost £3 an acre to burn it off; it all depends on the weather.
1138. Was it done by white or coloured labour? All by Chinese.
1139. What would be the cost of stumping it and making it fit for the plough? We have ploughed about
400 acres this year, but we left in all the trees that were very hard, such as the bean-tree and silky
oak. We did it by day work.
1140. What is about the value of your machinery at the mill? £33,000.
1141. About how much of it is English and how much colonial manufacture? About £8,000 colonial.
1142. Manufactured in the colony? Yes.
1143. At whose foundry? J. Walker and Co., Maryborough, and at Mackay, and a good deal from
Townsville; in fact, the colonial-made machinery must have cost more than £8,000.
1144. Do you effect your own repairs in this establishment? Yes; as much as we can.
1145. What is the average cost a year of repairs to your machinery? I can scarcely say.
1146. How much do you expend in your annual overhaul? It would go into from £700 to £800. Of
course there are always improvements to be made—new ideas coming out.

- T. F. Swallow. 1147. *By the Chairman*: When you say that the estate is not at present paying the interest on the capital invested in it, how do you account for that? Because our labour is so expensive.
- 15 Jan., 1889. 1148. Is there no other cause? We have had bad years. The past two years have been bad, and we have suffered from the drought and the grub.
1149. Had the low price of sugar anything to do with it? Yes.
1150. Then there really has been a combination of circumstances? Yes. We have been unfortunate during the past two years.
1151. Can you offer the Commission any suggestions as to how the sugar industry can be improved? Yes; if our labour was cheaper and we had reciprocity.
1152. *By Mr. King*: Does reciprocity mean an increased price for sugar? It means that we would not have to compete with the bounty-fed sugars.
1153. That means a rise in sugar? Yes.
1154. *By the Chairman*: Where is the £23,000 of annual expenditure generally spent? We spend £18,000 a year in wages alone.
1155. Then do the various tradesmen and mechanics of the district receive any advantage from that expenditure? Yes. I cannot say exactly how much, but I made up a return the other day—about a month ago—for one of the papers to prove what we spent £1,500 a month in Cairns amongst the local people. The rest of the money is all spent in the colony.
1156. If you had good seasons, cheap labour, and a reciprocity treaty with the other colonies, so as to avoid competition with the bounty-fed sugars, then you think that the estate would pay interest on the invested capital? Yes; it would.
1157. Have you any difficulty with the men you employ now? Which class?
1158. The kanakas? No; we have no trouble with them.
1159. Are you satisfied with your experiment in the employment of Japanese? We have employed very few. We do not keep them on in our slack season. We have only six working now; we prefer kanakas.
1160. Did you indent them originally? Yes.
1161. Then, in point of fact, you can say that Japanese are not suited for plantation work? I cannot say that—we are not in a position to judge, we have had such a few. We have never gone on with them because we are quite satisfied with the kanaka labour, and we do not want to experiment.
1162. *By Mr. Cowley*: What varieties of cane do you grow here? Principally the cheribon, rose bamboo, and rappoc.
1163. Which do you consider the best? The rose bamboo.
1164. Are any of those varieties diseased? No.
1165. Have you suffered from the damages of the grub at all? Yes.
1166. Does it attack any cane in particular? Well, it did not attack the cheribon, or very slightly.
1167. Did it attack all the varieties? Yes.
1168. Is it worse on the old plant or the new? On the old plant.
1169. Do you find that cultivated land—land that has been ploughed and scarified—is as liable to the grub? No; but we thought that that was because that land was planted with red cane, and they do not seem to care for that; they seem to go more for the other.
1170. Then the whole of the ploughed land was planted with cheribon cane? The majority of it was. It is not this year.
1171. Did you suffer much last year from the grub? Yes; a good deal.
1172. Did you try any remedy? Yes.
1173. Will you tell us what it was, and the effect? We tried dry lime, and lime and water, and carbolic acid and water; but they had no effect at all.
1174. Did they totally destroy the cane—did they eat the root? What they attack they destroy, and we had to start crushing earlier than we otherwise would so as to save the cane.
1175. Did it affect the ratoon crops? We did not try it; we took out all that was affected and replanted the land.
1176. Do you trash your cane, and how often? Yes; once or twice a year. I think.
1177. Do you believe trashing is beneficial? Yes; more especially in red cane.
1178. Could you tell us your average yield of cane per acre? Taking last year, which was a bad year, it was a little over 18 tons to the acre. That includes plants and ratoons, and is an average of the whole estate.
1179. Is your plant of the very latest design, and does it combine all the latest improvements? Yes.
1180. Does it include double crushing? Yes.
1181. What process do you use? Our own.
1182. Is that a secret process? No; it is patented.
1183. Is it a sulphur process? Yes; sulphur—what we call “finings.” It consists of magnesia and other chemicals.
1184. Has any other mill adopted it? No.
1185. *By Mr. King*: What quantity of sugar would you have expected to take off the same land in a good season? At the beginning of the year it was most promising.
1186. What did you expect to get at the beginning of the year? I gave an estimate of 1,700 tons.
1187. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you find this process of yours cheaper than the charcoal process? Yes.
1188. Do you find that you get as large a percentage of sugar from the juice? Yes; I would not go in for it if we could not get more than from charcoal.
1189. Do you keep an analytical chemist during the season? Yes.
1190. Do you use the polariscope to test the juice? No; we did, but we sent it away.
1191. How many tons of cane does it take to make a ton of sugar? A little under 12 tons. There was a lot of cane rotten last year owing to the grub.
1192. Then with better cane the percentage of sugar would be greater? Yes.
1193. Have you ever made a ton of sugar from less than 12 tons of cane? Yes; I have only taken the average for the past season.
1194. Could you tell us the percentage of molasses? No; but I could find out and let you know.
1195. What is the cost of the islanders, including their passage money? We got a quotation from the south a day or two ago of £25.
1196. Does

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1196. Does that include the capitation fee? No.
1197. Are you full-handed now with kanakas? No.
1198. Have you applied for others? Yes; we have a shipment due now.
1199. If this passage money were considerably less, would you extend your cultivation? Yes.
1200. Do the kanakas on the estate commit any crimes? We had a boy who killed a woman once; but it was held to be no crime and he got off.
1201. Was he tried unacquitted? Yes; there was another boy implicated, and both were acquitted.
1202. Are they addicted to drunkenness at all? No.
1203. Do they agree with the whites on the estate? Very well. We have never had any trouble between the blacks and the whites.
1204. Do the whites object to work with them? No. The white men rather prefer to have them working with them.
1205. Even when you pay high rates of passage money, have you much trouble in obtaining South Sea Islanders?—Can you get as many as you want? We have a great deal of trouble, and cannot get as many as we want. We take a ship or two shipments, and have to stand or fall by that. We charter our own ships.
1206. *By Mr. King:* Then you do not pay £25 per boy, but you hire a ship? No; not exactly that. We have to pay £25 per boy and take the whole shipment.
1207. *By Mr. Conley:* Then you have always to pay £25 a head? No; at times we have paid £23 per boy to the ship.
1208. Do you get many women amongst them? No; not many.
1209. Do the women work well? Very well.
1210. Are they any trouble at all? No.
1211. Do you object to take women?—Do you ever issue instructions to the recruiting agent not to take women? No.
1212. Have you no objection to them? No; only that they have families.
1213. Does the medical attendant come out regularly? Yes.
1214. What is the state of their health generally? Very good.
1215. What is the death rate? Last year it was 5 per cent.; and for the past six years it was 5½ per cent. per annum for the six years.
1216. You say that you have 6,000 acres of land—how much is agricultural land? I do not know that I would be right in saying that we have 6,000 acres of land, because some of it has not been confirmed.
1217. It has been selected, and you are fulfilling the conditions? Yes. We are only working two selections; the others we are not working because the blacks are too numerous.
1218. Is it all agricultural land? The most of it is agricultural land.
1219. Is this land purchased or selected in the same way? Selected.
1220. As you have so much land, would you be willing to lease the spare land to white farmers if they would undertake to cultivate it? Yes.
1221. Would you be prepared to assist them in any way? Yes.
1222. And to encourage them? Yes.
1223. In what way? We would advance them money on work done, at so much per cent.
1224. Can you get these men to come and take the land? I do not think so. You might get Chinamen.
1225. I mean white farmers? No; we had one white farmer, and he took up land from us. You could see him if you wished; he is working on the plantation now. After working it for twelve months he could not give us a penny. We even put a house up for him.
1226. Did he give any reason for his failure? He said he could not work the place.
1227. Is he working with you for wages now? Yes. He is a carpenter.
1228. You say you have thirty-two white men working now? Yes; we employ over fifty during the crushing.
1229. You say that the wages for white men are 42s. a week—is that just for mechanics? We have one man now who gets 14s. a day; he is a bricklayer.
1230. He is only a temporary man? Well, our carpenters get £3 5s. a week and a house.
1231. What do the engineers and blacksmiths get? The first engineer used to get £4 a week, and the others—six in number—are getting £3 a week—in fact, I can tell you from the paper in my hand exactly how much each man gets:—One gets 70s. a week; one 65s. a week; four men get 60s. a week each; one gets 55s.; six get 50s. a week each; one gets 45s.; two get 42s. 6d. a week each; three men get 42s. a week each; one (the bricklayer) gets 84s. a week. Then the managers, they have to be added. That is the labourers only.
1232. *By Mr. King:* Do these men get rations? No; they get houses.
1233. *By Mr. Conley:* Have you ever tried purchasing plants from other districts in the North? Yes; last year. We can scarcely tell how they will turn out as it was a bad year; but I think it will succeed well, and it is desirable for planters to do it. I have arranged to do it next year.
1234. You say that one reason for the non-success of the plantation has been the fall in the price of sugar? Yes.
1235. If the labour employed had fallen in proportion would you have been able to make it pay? I think so. We could have gone along then.
1236. Is not all coloured labour much more expensive now than it was some years ago? Yes.
1237. Is that presumably owing to the difficulty of obtaining them? I suppose so.
1238. *By Mr. King:* You were saying just now, in talking about farmers, that you would encourage them to take land. What price would you be prepared to give those farmers for their cane? I could not say that without order; but I should think from 9s. to 10s. a ton. That is, I believe, the lowest we would give for cane.
1239. You have no forest land under cane? A very little up here, just enough to see how the cane will grow on it.
1240. Has any of your land been long enough under cane to show signs of exhaustion? We took out cane last year.
1241. Why? The grub attacked the cane and it failed.

1242. Did

- T. F. Swallow. 1242. Did you find any signs of exhaustion in the land? No.
 1243. I suppose that all the capital invested on this place belongs to the firm—that it is the capital of the firm? Yes.
 1244. Suppose that half of the capital had been borrowed capital on which you had to pay interest, would you find great difficulty in carrying on? Yes; great difficulty.
 1245. Are you aware if there is a great deal of borrowed money invested in some of the plantations? Yes; a great deal, I believe.
 1246. Do you know what rate of interest is charged on money borrowed on sugar plantations? No; I could not say.
 1247. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you manured the land at all? No. We have mixed the refuse from our process with the irrigation water, and irrigated with it.
 1248. How much have you irrigated? About 300 or 400 acres.
 1249. Was the result beneficial? Yes, I think so; but it was very hard to tell, because the year was so desperately bad. Some blocks went better than the others, and some of those were not irrigated.
 1250. Do you pay the kanakas their wages every six months? No; we pay their money to the Polynesian inspector every six months.
 1251. What does he do with the money? Puts it into the bank.
 1252. Do the boys get the interest? Yes; they get their principal and interest at the end of three years.
 1253. Have you had any complaints from the islanders about not getting their wages? No; one or two may have asked for them, and said that at other places they got their money when they wanted it.
 1254. Then the islanders are perfectly satisfied with the existing arrangements? I think so. They never trouble us for money.
 1255. *By Mr. King*: Does the Polynesian inspector come out here to see them paid? Yes; at the end of the three years.
 1256. Does he ever come out here to have a look round the plantation? Yes.
 1257. *By the Chairman*: Have any of these islanders who have died had any wages to their credit? Yes.
 1258. What has become of it? Of course they did not get it, and their friends did not get it.
 1259. Has any discontentment been shown by the friends of deceased kanakas on account of not getting that money? Yes.
 1260. Then you think that the deceased's relatives ought to get it? Yes; because the system of the Government keeping the money does harm to the planters employing the men.
 1261. Have the men ever entrusted any of their money to you for safe keeping? Yes; I have about £50 now. I always book it. They like to have their own wages and leave it with me. A boy died recently, and he had given £6 to the Polynesian inspector. On the boy's death his relatives asked the inspector for the £6, but never got it. That was money that the boy had brought back from the island, and was not wages due to him.
 1262. You said that last year you irrigated 400 acres of sugar-cane. Where did you get the water from? From the hills at the back.
 1263. The firm has utilised the natural fall for their wants and for the purposes of the plantation? Yes.
 1264. How much has it cost to bring the water supply for the plantation into the state of perfection in which it is now? A six-inch pipe brings it in a distance of $\frac{1}{4}$ miles.
 1265. The whole establishment is supplied with water from that source, also the houses, gardens, &c. Is there a sufficient supply to irrigate portions of the plantation, if necessary? Yes; we can irrigate with the waste water. There is not sufficient to irrigate the whole of the plantation. We find that the 400 acres are plenty to irrigate in a dry season.
 1266. Still if it were not for this very fine water supply that you have utilised, you would have to use other means for obtaining water here? Yes.
 1267. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you know if the islanders spend all their money in this district before they go home? Yes; every penny. Some of them may take a very little back with them; other districts get the benefit of nearly the whole of the wages paid the islanders.
 1268. Have you suffered much from the depredations of the blacks? No.
 1269. Have they ever fired any of your cane? No.
 1270. Have you many horses here? Yes, seventy.
 1271. Do you feed them with corn or oats? With oats.
 1272. Why? Because we find that oats are the best.
 1273. Do you always feed with oats? Yes, always.
 1274. Are the horses colonial bred or imported? Colonial bred.
 1275. Do you kill your own meat on the plantation? No, it is supplied by the local butcher.

WILLIAM HENRY SWALLOW examined:

- W. H. Swallow. 1276. *By the Chairman*: Are you one of the proprietors of this plantation? No, only one of the sons of one of the proprietors.
 1277. Do you manage the fruit cultivation here? Yes.
 1278. Will you kindly enumerate the number and kind of fruits grown on this estate? Yes; we have 100 acres of bananas; I am giving you the statement roughly—I can't state exactly the number of acres. There are also 20 acres of pine-apples, 20 acres of fruit-trees; 2,000 orange-trees, 1,000 lemon-trees, 500 citron-trees, about 400 coffee-trees, 500 limes, 2 acres of pea-nuts (ground nuts), 4 acres of ginger. We are growing about an acre of rosellas. Ten acres of mangoes,—I can't tell you the number of trees, we have so many. Then there are about 3 acres of different kinds of things. Then there are about 150 cocoa-nut trees, if not more.
 1279. Then are you of opinion that fruit-growing of the description you have now enumerated can be made a profitable industry? Not the way we are situated at present.
 1280. What are the drawbacks? Well, the carriage and time it requires to take them to the different ports; the bad treatment they receive on board the different ships; and it seems to me (of course I have not had a chance of seeing any of these things) that fruit being a perishable article it does not get a chance to arrive in sound condition in market, and because it is perishable the agents to whom it is sent combine to keep down the prices rather than to assist the growers.
 1281. Then

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1281. Then if proper facilities were afforded in the directions you have intimated, you think that fruit-growing would become a profitable industry here? I think it would.

1282. *By Mr. King*: Do all the trees you have enumerated thrive and grow well? Yes. There are others I could mention, but we have dropped them. In reference to the combination of agents I spoke of before, I may mention that I mean that when there is no demand for fruit it is not because such is actually the case, but because the middlemen will not help us.

1283. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are the trees all bearing? No, the great majority of them are not, and won't be till next year, and some of them for years after.

1284. What trees have borne? Oranges, lemons, citrons, coffee, peanuts, bananas, ginger, rosellas, and limes—limes are one of the best fruits in the district; also mangoes.

1285. Have you shipped any of these kinds? Yes, all kinds.

1286. Are you continually shipping? Yes.

1287. Where do you principally send them to? All fruits except mangoes we send to Melbourne. We sent some mangoes to Brisbane, but the shipment was unsatisfactory, and we would not do so again.

1288. Have you had any great loss on any of your shipments? Yes. During December I had a big loss. On the 11th December we sent by the "Bulimba" to Melbourne 160 cases bananas, being an average of nineteen or twenty dozen to a case; 140 cases pineapples, containing two dozen to the case; eight cases of mangoes, containing twenty dozen in a case. On the 13th December we sent by the "Cintra" 103 cases bananas, containing nineteen to twenty dozen in the case; sixty-four cases pineapples, containing an average of two dozen to the case; and two cases of granadillas. I got a letter from my father on the subject in which he enclosed me a copy of a letter which he had sent to the Melbourne agents of the A.U.S.N. Co., which letter I place at the disposal of the Commission. That letter is as follows:—

"DEAR SIRS,

"Our firm at Cairns shipped us by s.s. 'Bulimba,' on the 11th inst., 318 cases of fruit. The cases were made expressly for carrying fruit, having openings on the top and bottom to admit of the air getting to the fruit. Your officers of the 'Bulimba' had these cases put down under the hatches and packed as closely together as possible (the same as ordinary merchandise would be packed), thus losing the advantage of the cases having openings left for the air to get at the fruit. The 'Bulimba' had scarcely any cargo, and of course there was plenty of room to stow the cases in a proper way. We also find that the whole of our shipment of fruit was kept down under the hatches the whole of the voyage from Cairns to Melbourne, although on the same voyage, a large quantity of cases of fruit were taken on board at Sydney and brought to Melbourne on deck. The result of the treatment our fruit received was that it was almost completely destroyed, very little of which being of use and the greater quantity had to be carted from your steamer to the manure depot."

"Had our fruit arrived in good order, which it would but for the treatment above stated, it would have sold at 8s. per case, which would amount to £127 4s. As the blame is entirely yours, in all fairness you should pay us for our loss. We here mention that this is not the first time we have been similarly treated."

"Yours faithfully,

"SWALLOW AND DERHAM.

"Messrs. William Siddleley and Co., agents for the Australasian United Steam Navigation Co., Ltd., Melbourne.

"P.S.—We will send our claim in a few days, less the amount our agent, Mr. Daff, gets for what he is trying to sell out of the shipment.—S. & D."

I also got a letter from my righthand man—that is a friend of mine, whom I always call my righthand man—who went down in the "Bulimba." In that letter he says, "I am very sorry to tell you that nearly all the fruit in the 'Bulimba' is bad—the bananas, mangoes, and most of the pineapples; you could not believe the condition if you did not see it; and of the shipment by the 'Cintra'—the steamer after the one I left by—all the fruit is in a worse condition, if possible; and we are not the only people, for of 700 bunches of bananas all I saw coming out of the steamers were just as bad. Your father has written very strongly to the company about it. The whole of the fruit by the 'Bulimba' was packed down below in the hold, although there was plenty of room on deck. All the fruit taken in from Brisbane to Sydney was packed on deck." We sent 31 cases of mangoes to Brisbane to our agents there, on which they write, "We have had no end of trouble with the mangoes, and we certainly would not recommend any further shipments. We tried all the fruiterers, wholesale and retail, and they would not look at them. They say that plenty are offering at absurdly low prices. We have managed to sell ten or fifteen cases amongst our own friends and have not quitted the balance. To-day we have had the cases repacked, and are doing our best to sell, as the fruit is getting over ripe." In a further letter he writes, "The mangoes were repacked and we sold the balance to-day by auction. I have not the account sales, but they will reach about 6s." There were twenty dozen in each case.

1289. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you any idea how the loss was occasioned in the Melbourne shipment? Yes, the bad treatment only that they had on board ship. For a time we shipped an average of 200 cases of bananas a week, and they all arrived in splendid condition, but that was when we were shipping sugar and I could get the bananas straight on to the ship.

1290. Do you always ship bananas in cases? No, we used to ship in bunches until the rough treatment they got made us give it up. It is impossible to ship any other way than in cases. We make the cases on the ground.

1291. What do the cases cost? 1s. 4d. a case.

1292. Do you get any return for that? We sell them to Swallow and Ariel, in Port Melbourne, for 1s. a case.

1293. Then you lose 4d a case? Yes.

1294. *By the Chairman*: Is the timber out of which the cases are made sawn from your own trees? Yes. I might explain that no one would give us 1s. a case for the cases except Swallow and Ariel, who use them for their own trade. We make them a certain size to suit their trade.

1295. *By Mr. Cowley*: What oranges do you find do best with you—seedlings or grafted? Well, I believe in the seedlings myself. I think they bear quite as quickly, if not more quickly, but whether or not they last longer I have not had the experience to say.

1296. Are all your trees healthy? Yes.

1297. Have they ever suffered from any disease? Just the blight.

1298. Have you any remedy for it? Yes; we give them kerosene and soap-suds and ashes.

1299. How do you employ the ash? We put it in the kerosene and soap-suds.

1300. Do

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1300. Do you find that this kills the blight without injuring the tree in any way? Yes.
1301. How old are your oldest trees? Five years.
1302. How long have they been in bearing? Two years; this will be the third year.
1303. Could you tell us about the average number of dozen ripe fruit you take from a five or four-year-old tree? No, but I could find out.
1304. What is the nature of the soil in which your trees are grown? Both scrub and forest land. We have got some in scrub land, and some on the side of hills.
1305. Is it rich soil? Yes, very rich.
1306. Stiff or friable? Friable.
1307. What is the nature of the subsoil? It is volcanic right down. The soil is a great depth.
1308. Which soil do you think best, scrub or forest? Well, the only trees that are bearing yet are on scrub land. I think they would do just as well on the side of the hills on forest land. Those on the forest land look just as healthy for young trees. It is very good soil where they are.
1309. Does this apply to all your fruits? Oh, no. The great majority, in fact all the fruits with the exception of those few orange trees, grow much better in scrub land. In the matter of bananas it is useless to attempt to grow them on forest land.
1310. What labour do you principally use in the cultivation of your fruit trees? Chinamen and kanakas.
1311. Which do you prefer? Well, for weeding and working amongst the bananas I prefer kanakas; and for weeding of all sorts amongst oranges I prefer kanakas; but if it is a matter of planting, then I prefer the Chinamen. The reason is that the kanakas have not had the experience, but I have no doubt they could be taught, and would be quite as good as the Chinamen.
1312. Have you ever tried it with white men? Yes; we have tried gardening with white men.
1313. With what result? We could never do any good with them at all. We were continually changing, and had to give it up.
1314. By Mr. King: What was the reason for the changing? The men said they could not do the work, and they did not take any interest in the work. They said it was too hot and that they were not well. If I went down suddenly at any time I used to find them resting and smoking. In fact, I would not take charge of the fruit at all if I had to do it with white labour.
1315. Are you engaged in the preservation of fruit as well? Yes.
1316. By the Chairman: Will you state what fruit you have preserved and by what process? We preserve bananas by drying them with hot air, and also by clarifying them with sugar. Also lemons, citrons, and orange peel, ginger—preserved in syrup. As a matter of fact the lemon and orange peel is not candied, it is preserved in syrup. We also preserve cumquats.
1317. How do you prepare and pack the preserved bananas you make? We peel the bananas, and split them by cutting them down the centre, and dry them by a hot air process, according to the ripeness of the banana, from four to five hours. We then send them down in bulk to Melbourne for our people there to put up in packages of 1 lb. each. We have another kind which we call preserved bananas. These are boiled in syrup and then put on a tray to allow the syrup to drain off, after which they are dusted over with a little powdered sugar, and then put up in 1 lb. packets. Both these packages are put up in specially prepared paper and wrapped up on the outside with tinfoil.
1318. Have you found the returns from the sale of this fruit (bananas) sufficiently remunerative to justify the continuance of the industry? Yes; so much so that we are putting up a large building and a large evaporator so that we may go into it on a bigger scale.
1319. From your past experience of this industry of drying bananas by this process just named, do you think that there is an unlimited market for the sale of the preserved and dried fruit? Out of Queensland, yes. I think it is a market that has got to be made. I think there will be an unlimited market.
1320. Have you found any disinclination on the part of Brisbane buyers to purchase northern fruits? Actually, we have not ourselves. This is the first shipment we have tried; but from what our neighbours have tried and from our own little experience, I would say so.
1321. Do you think that this arises from want of knowledge of the tropical fruits grown in this district or from some other cause? I think it is from another cause.
1322. Would you state what you think is that cause? I think that fruit being such a perishable article we do not get a fair chance with the middle man. The buyer knows that we must part with it or lose it, and the fruit has to be sold at a sacrifice.
1323. Outside of Queensland you are of opinion that fruit preserving, as has been described by you, is likely to become a profitable industry? Yes.
1324. And at the present time you are quite satisfied with your returns from it? Yes.
1325. By Mr. Cowley: Is all the labour in connection with fruit drying done by hand, or have you any machinery? We have one small machine at present, and will use that till we get our new evaporator.
1326. I mean for peeling and slicing? They are all sliced and peeled by hand.
1327. Have you heard of Spou's evaporator? Yes.
1328. Have you tried it? No, we have not tried it.
1329. Have you seen it at work? No, but my father has, and my right hand man has. We are using an American machine at present. The machine we use was the first of the kind invented. Spou's was made afterwards.
1330. Is the machine that you are building your own design or an American one? Our own design.
1331. How many bananas will this new evaporator dry per day? 200 bunches of an average of twelve dozen to the bunch.
1332. Could you tell us what is the loss of weight per pound in drying the bananas? It takes on an average seven bananas to make 1 lb. of dried bananas. I never weighed ripe bananas; there must be a great loss in weight.
1333. By the Chairman: What will be the cost of erecting the new works, buildings and all? About £350.
1334. By Mr. Cowley: Does that include dressing and fitting? No; that would be another £25. Between £350 and £400 would cover the whole undertaking.
1335. By the Chairman: In addition to the drying of the bananas by the process you name, you intend to go into making candied fruits and lemon, orange and citron peel? Yes. Also into making chutney, preserving ginger, and candied pineapple, and generally to make as much use of the northern fruits as we possibly can.
1336. Are

W. H.
Swallow.
15 Jan., 1889.

1336. Are you of opinion that the fruit industry of this district can be very largely improved by having better facilities for shipping to the southern ports? Yes. Suppose the Government were to subsidise the mail boats that agreed not to carry cargo, and reduce the time they have for bringing the mails, so as to induce them to have better and faster boats which would only carry mails, passengers, and fruits, that would help us. They should also fit up those boats so as to carry fruit. I think that with such a state of things, and if we were allowed to have the labour that we are now using, a very profitable market could be found for the northern fruits in the southern ports. You have to remember that the people down south require to be educated up to a lot of the fruits grown here, but there is not the slightest doubt that they would be. There are lots of places in Victoria where the people never see a banana, and do not know what a banana is. I have been in country districts where you would not see a banana in twelve months. There is a big trade in those places for dried bananas and pineapples.

1337. Have you any further suggestion to offer us now by which you think the fruit industry can be assisted? If better facilities were afforded for taking fruits, not only to Brisbane, but to all parts in Australia south of Townsville, it would help us. It would be a great help also if we did not suffer so much at the hands of the middlemen. Some of these men now have the monopoly of the fruit trade in Brisbane. I was told in one letter that thirty-one cases of fruit were too much to send to Brisbane at one time. If the Governments of the other colonies were to take the duty off fruit it would do the thing at once; but the great trouble is the shipping.

1338. *By Mr. Cowley:* Then you think that reciprocity in fruits would be beneficial? It would be the making of Northern Queensland as regards the fruit trade, and I look on the fruit trade as being the great trade up here.

1339. *By Mr. Groom:* Better than sugar? Rather. I may state that fruit grows principally, I may say only on scrub lands, and on scrub land the grass and weeds grow so fast and thickly that it takes a lot of labour to keep them down. In fairly even country under bananas one man could not keep more than four acres going; while down in the creeks, which is the best place for bananas, he could not do more than three acres. And as they do not average more than 300 bunches to one acre, you can easily see that unless we have cheap labour the thing would never pay. We send them to Melbourne, and then for good bananas we do not get more than 5s. a bunch, and that is after paying 1s. duty and 1s. freight, leaving us 3s. each. Now, perhaps out of every three shipments two shipments are rotten and taken to the manure heap. That has been our experience of fruit. In addition to the "Bulimba" or "Cintra" shipments I have sent other two, on the 22nd December and one on 5th January, but I do not know how they have turned out.

1340. *By Mr. Cowley:* When you say that one man can keep four acres of bananas going, is that to keep it in a perfect state of cultivation? I mean to keep it as it ought to be kept, because if neglected, instead of getting twelve and fifteen dozen to the bunch we only get six or eight dozen.

1341. Would that man be able to do everything in connection with these four acres—cutting down the old trees and cutting all the bunches? I am only speaking of when the thing is actually started—when you have got the bananas in full growing order. That means lighter work—simply keeping the weeds out of the ground, keeping the trees in order, and in cutting the bunches. He could also cut the trees down—in fact, one man could do the whole thing on four acres.

1342. *By the Chairman:* What would you consider a fair price to the growers for a bunch of bananas with twelve dozen on it? The grower gets about 1s. 6d.

1343. *By Mr. Cowley:* Will you be in a position to purchase fruit for preserving or for exporting? Yes.

1344. Would you be prepared to lease the land to farmers to grow fruit for you if they could not get land of their own? Yes.

1345. On easy terms? On fair terms.

1346. Would you purchase all the fruit they grew? Yes, of certain kinds.

1347. You would stipulate what they were to grow? Yes.

DENNIS DILLON examined:

D. Dillon.

1348. *By the Chairman:* What are you? I am a carpenter.

1349. Have you been a farmer? I have been for a time on a selection here.

1350. Were you a farmer before you came here? No, I was working for my father who was a farmer. 15 Jan., 1889.

1351. You leased some land from Messrs. Swallow and Derham? Yes.

1352. What did you grow? I planted corn the first year, and the second year corn and sweet potatoes.

1353. How many acres had you? 30 acres.

1354. How many did you cultivate? 23 acres.

1355. What labour did you use? I had two white labourers fore eight months and then I had Chinese.

1356. How long were you in total occupation of the land? About eighteen months.

1357. What sort of crops did you get? Very bad crops.

1358. Was the season favourable? No; during the first year I had 8 acres of corn, and I did not get more than half a-ton off the whole lot.

1359. What did you get during the second year? I got about 6 tons of corn off 15 acres; the remainder I had in sweet potatoes.

1360. What yield did you get from your sweet potatoes? I got 15 tons to the acre.

1361. What was the cause of the light crop the second year? I could not say; the season seemed to be fair. There was sufficient rain for the time, but I don't believe the corn got time to ripen.

1362. Did you keep the corn free from weeds? Yes.

1363. How many cobs were there generally to the stalk? Two and sometimes three. Some of them seemed pretty small, but some of them a very good size.

1364. What rent did you pay? I was supposed to pay £1 an acre after the first year. I have paid no rent at all.

1365. When did you leave it? Four months ago.

1366. *By Mr. Cowley:* Is this land under the plough? No; if it had been under the plough I would have made a better hand of it.

1367. Was it scrub? Yes; scrub that had been fallen about two years when I got it, but I had to clear it over again.

1368. What price did you get for your corn? About 4s. a bushel.

1369. What price per ton did you get for your sweet potatoes? 30s.

1370. Had

- D. Dillon. 1370. Had you to deliver them for that? No; the firm fetched them in.
 1371. Did you sell all your produce to the firm? The most of it. I sold a few tons of corn outside.
 15 Jan., 1889. 1372. What did you pay to the white men and Chinese who worked for you? The two white men I had were friends of my own, and when they left I did not care to get any more, and I tried Chinamen and found that they were worse. I tried them for a time on day wages—for a time by piecework.
 1373. Were those two white men friends or partners? Friends, not partners.
 1374. What wages did you pay? 45s. a week and they found themselves.
 1375. They got everything and you got nothing? Yes.
 1376. Did you make anything out of it at all? I lost about £200 by the transaction.
 1377. Did you work hard yourself the whole of the time; actual manual labour? No. I was working a good part of the time here at my trade as a carpenter. I left those men to look after it themselves. I had a brother who looked after it; he was one of the two labourers, and he naturally looked after my interests.
 1378. You think that the men were industrious all the time, and did not neglect their work? They worked very well.
 1379. Is it fairly good soil? Pretty good soil. It is very good if you get plenty of rain, but in dry weather it is very bad.
 1380. Is the land now under crop? No, not now.
 1381. Did you try to grow sugar for the mill? I planted a little sugar and it turned out pretty well. But I did not make any agreement with the mill, as I considered that I had lost enough, and so I gave it best.
 1382. *By the Chairman*: Now, you do not think the principle of leasing out blocks of land would answer here? No. I do not think it is a good principle at all. It might be good if you had a good market for your produce and could use the plough.
 1383. If the land was prepared for cultivation by the plough, would that do? Yes; but even then if you do not get a good season you would not get anything out of it.
 1384. *By Mr. Cowley*: From what you know of the country, do you think you could grow cane to pay at 9s. a ton? I believe I could; it would depend on the season.
 1385. Would you be willing to take a piece of land and try? I would be willing to try if the land was my own, but not if I had to rent it.

TUESDAY, 15 JANUARY, 1889.

CAIRNS DISTRICT.

(At Cairns.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

ROBERT FRANCIS WALKER examined:

- R. F. Walker. 1386. *By the Chairman*: What business are you carrying on? I am a farmer, and have been mostly in Toowoomba and here. I was farming in Toowoomba for twenty-seven years, and I have been five years here. I came up here to start sugar.
 15 Jan., 1889. 1387. What is the area of your selection? 1,280 acres.
 1388. Have you got any of it under cultivation? Yes; I had some under cane, but I burnt it off because we had no means of crushing it—I did not think it worth while going on with it. Since then I have been trying different things—oats and rice. The oats grow very well. I grow a little tobacco, but the price of labour destroys all. The rice did very well. I have at present ten tons of paddy in the place. If there was a market for it I could grow any quantity of it.
 1389. Are you carrying on any cultivation now? Yes; I have about twenty-five acres under corn, and I have rice. If there were any roads to my selection I could soon get 300 or 400 acres of rice in, and as for the labour I would get machinery. There are three kinds of rice.
 1390. What grows well in this district? All those products I have mentioned grow well in this district.
 1391. Have you tried coffee? I have some coffee plants now growing.
 1392. How do they grow? The Liberian I don't think is worth growing, but the other is.
 1393. Does Arabian coffee grow well with you? Yes.
 1394. Have you tried indigo? Not here; I did on the Downs. In fact, I have not been able to get the seed here, or I would have tried it.
 1395. Have you tried fruit trees? I have different kinds of fruit trees in now.
 1396. What kind of trees have you? At present I have mangoes, and different kinds of custard apples, jack-fruit, Indian plums, and peaches, but the latter are no use in this climate. I have oranges and limes, and all the citron tribe. They grow well on good land, provided they have plenty of drainage. Unless they are well drained the trees die at the end of eight or nine years—we have such heavy falls of rain all through the summer.
 1397. Have you any bananas and pineapples? Yes; any quantity. Also Brazil nuts. I could hardly enumerate what I have. I have all sorts of spice; I have allspice and cinnamon. Cinnamon grows as well here as it does in Ceylon. I have some nutmegs, but unfortunately when the hot weather came they died. They will not grow without shade. It is the same with cocoa.
 1398. Have you tried cocoa? Yes, but when I went South my people neglected to shade them, and they died. They need shade especially when young. I tried lucerne but it failed. 1399. Could

1399. Could all these fruits, except peaches, be grown in the district with proper cultivation? Yes, R. F. Walker. with proper cultivation and proper situation. We have tried to grow them in the field where there was no drainage, and it is a perfect farce to do so. 15 Jan., 1889.

1400. Are you able to make money out of the cultivation of these products? Not the least. I have lost money. We could make money if we had roads and bridges. For want of bridges we can't get over the creeks. We can't cross the Mulgrave River or the Behama Creek for five months in the year for want of a bridge.

1401. Will you state the reasons why you think that the cultivation of these products is not profitable? The want of labour and the want of bridges, with me. The want of labour is the cause with most people. There is another cause. A lot of people have taken up selections and merely hold them and keep the *bonâ fide* selectors from settling down in the district, and labour, in consequence, will not come into a neighbourhood when there are only one or two resident selectors.

1402. Have you shipped any fruit from Cairns? Yes; bananas to the Southern colonies. Some went to Melbourne and some to Brisbane. But the expenses eat up your profits. If the Mulgrave River was snagged, we could carry our stuff to the mouth of the river by boat and get it away direct.

1403. Have you had any loss by shipping fruit? The balance was on the wrong side of the ledger.

1404. Have you had cause to complain of the shipping arrangements? They destroy our fruit. They destroy the half of it by the way they throw it out. They sling fifteen or sixteen bunches together from under the hatches of the steamer on to the deck and to the wharf, and half the bananas drop off into the hold.

1405. *By Mr. King:* What description of labour have you employed? Mostly European and Chinese. I have never had a blackfellow yet.

1406. What wages do you pay Europeans? £1 a-week, and sometimes 30s. and rations.

1407. *By the Chairman:* Even at those wages could you make your farm pay? Yes, if they would work. They don't work. Sometimes you may get an old man to work. A man who will take a month to hoe an acre of land will not do much.

1408. From your knowledge of the district after being in it five years, and from your knowledge of the fruit-growing industries here, what suggestions can you make for the benefit of that industry? Well, my idea is that if the harbour was opened and ships could come right up to the wharf, and if they took more care in loading and discharging the produce and fruit, something might be made out of it. But at the present time, as long as the ships have got (as they tell us) the stalk of a bunch of bananas to deliver they do not care. The agents have told me that plainly.

1409. *By Mr. Cowley:* You said that the Mulgrave wants a bridge? Yes.

1410. Have you made any applications to the Divisional Board for a bridge? I as a member of the Divisional Board have tried, but there has always been opposition.

1411. Has the Board sufficient means at their disposal to put bridges there? No, they have not.

1412. Have you had any estimate of the cost of a bridge? No. I think one would cost £2,000.

1413. Has not a deputation from your Board waited on the Government and asked for a bridge? Yes; a self-constituted deputation did, but not by the authority of the Board.

1414. *By the Chairman:* What would be most preferable to the district, snagging the river or putting a bridge across? I think putting a bridge across would be the most convenient at the present time.

1415. *By Mr. King:* You said that a considerable quantity of land was locked up by being held by absentee settlers. What is the proportion of the land held by them? Two-thirds of what is taken up. I know of 200 or 300 common bananas planted on a piece of land, and that was counted as money expended in improvement. As soon as they get their certificate they let it all go back to scrub again.

1416. Is the whole of the frontage of the Mulgrave where it is navigable selected? No.

1417. Is all the good land selected? No.

1418. Is it open to selection? Some portions of it are.

1419. How many selections do you suppose there are on the frontage of the river? There are several selections which have been taken up by parties who had no means. They took them up, and after holding them for a year they gave them up.

1420. How many settlers are there who are cultivating land on the Mulgrave River? With the exception of myself there really are not any. They are only going through the form of doing so.

1421. What is the average wage of a European labourer in this district? Labourers on plantations, farms, and selections, £1 a week and rations. That is about it, I think.

1422. What wages do the Divisional Board pay to their labourers? 9s. a day. It is too much for all they do.

1423. *By the Chairman:* Are not a good many of the selectors on the Mulgrave packers? No; only a few.

1424. *By Mr. Cowley:* Why do you not grow sugar? Because we have no mill to crush it.

1425. How far are you from the Pyramid Plantation? In a straight line five miles; but to get to it we would have to go nine miles. We have a good position for a central mill.

1426. You said that paddy would pay you to grow it if you could find a market. Is there not a market in Cairns? Only a limited market.

1427. Is there not a rice mill there, the owner of which will buy all that can be bought? There is only one, and when there is only one mill in a district they have it all their own way.

1428. At what price per ton would it pay you to grow paddy? £8.

1429. Do you employ any labour now? No; not just now.

1430. How many acres have you under crop now including fruit trees? Twenty-five or twenty-six acres. We have a lot of scrub land cleared. I have got two acres grubbed fit for the plough at a cost of £24 for the two acres. We could grow ginger, and I could supply any quantity at 1d. per lb.

1431. Have you great difficulty in obtaining labour? Yes; when the rice was growing we could not get labour. I had eleven acres of rice, and I had to work it with one man and myself.

1432. You could not obtain labour at 30s. a week and rations? No.

1433. You say that a good many of these selections are abandoned here? Yes.

1434. Did not the selectors abandon them after a fair trial, like yourself? Many of them never went to live on the selections at all, but gave them up.

1435. If

R. F. Walker. 1435. If they were there what could they grow at a profit?—You say you have lost money; do you not think it would be the same with them? Yes; I think so. If there were a lot of them working their land it would induce labour to come to the neighbourhood.

1436. If the whole of those men were cultivating their land, is there anything they could grow at the present price of labour that would pay them for their trouble? No.

1437. *By Mr. King*: If you grew cane for a central mill, at what price per ton could you afford to sell it? I would be glad to take 8s. if the mill was near at hand. That is, 8s. cut and put on trucks.

1438. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you mean that you could grow, cut, and deliver cane on trucks at 8s. per ton? Yes; I could do better at that than at growing wheat at Toowoomba.

1439. Have you had any experience in growing sugar cane? Yes; in Brisbane.

1440. And selling it? No; I left that to others.

1441. Did you grow much there? Forty-five acres.

1442. How was it that it did not pay the grower? Sugar got low in price, and it did not pay.

1443. Did that affect your price? It was in connection with the mill that I was.

1444. Then you were manufacturing it? Yes; I had nothing to do with the working of the concern.

1445. Was not the labour much cheaper down there? Yes.

1446. And the land all under the plough? Yes.

1447. What wages did you pay there for good white men? 15s. and £1 a week, and they were good men, and did a fair day's work. That was simply because they knew that others would get their job if they did not work.

1448. Is living cheaper down there than up here? Not a great deal. The only thing I find dearer is sugar. I find that I could buy sugar at Toowoomba for a less price than I can here.

1449. *By the Chairman*: Do you not think that the high wages paid by the Divisional Board, and the high wages paid at Townsville and Herberton, has something to do with the labour here? Possibly it has.

1450. Do you know any men who prefer to work in that way rather than go on a farm? Two or three; not more. Board work is not generally day work; it is very often contract work, but there are times when they employ some men by day work.

1451. Have you employed any newly arrived emigrants? Yes; but I have such a lot of trouble to get them. I had to send to Townsville and depend on the agents, and did not know whether I was getting a farmer or a weaver.

1452. *By Mr. King*: How did they shape? They work very well, except that they are very fond of breaking tools. Very often, instead of getting a farmer, you get a man who does not know anything about a farm. That sort of man is very little use.

1453. Those you have had have not been a success? Out of ten I had, two were. Those are the only good men I ever had. They were farming men.

1454. How long did these two men remain with you? Their full time. Then they wanted to go away somewhere else.

1455. How long was their agreement? For six months.

1456. Did the Government pay their passage to Cairns for you? Yes; but now they won't do that. We have now to employ an agent to get immigrant labour. I was told I would have to pay their fare up here.

1457. How did they keep their health;—did they suffer from sickness? I never saw any of them sick yet. Where we live it is a very healthy place.

1458. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you leased any of your land to Chinamen? No.

1459. *By the Chairman*: You said that the bad roads had something to do with the difficulty of cultivating your land; do you mean in addition to the want of bridges? If we had the bridges that is all we want. The roads would really not be half so bad if we had the bridges. But when we are sixteen weeks without being able to get a dray to Cairns it is bad.

1460. *By Mr. King*: Have the aboriginals given you any trouble? No, not me; only a little thieving.

1461. Did you ever employ them? No. I understand that on the Russell many people employ them falling scrub, and they do their work very well. But they steal the food. When I first went there they troubled the horses a good deal, wounding and spearing them. I dispersed them once and I had no more bother with the horses. I may add, before closing my evidence, that I have to-day sold my paddy, which I had to keep for seven months, at £9 a ton delivered at Redbank.

THOMAS MACKAY examined:

T. Mackay. 1462. *By the Chairman*: Where do you reside? I reside principally on the Mulgrave road, and occasionally on the Russell.

15 Jan., 1889. 1463. Have you a selection there? Yes; 320 acres.

1464. How much have you cultivated? At different times about sixty acres.

1465. What is the principal crop you grow? I grow maize, oats, sweet potatoes, and English potatoes. I have pretty well tried everything.

1466. What has been the average crop of maize per acre? The first time I put maize in I had no crops at all; it was a complete failure. The land we sowed was too new and too rich. On the same field there is maize now and it is looking well.

1467. *By Mr. King*: What was your average per acre when you had a crop? Twenty-five bushels.

1468. *By the Chairman*: What is the average of oats per acre? Two tons per acre of oatsen hay.

1469. Have you a good market? Yes; I get 10s. a cwt.

1470. What sort of crop did you have of English potatoes? Two to three tons; I got 10s. a cwt.

1471. Do you grow any fruit trees? I have got a few orange trees, but not many.

1472. Then you confine your attention to agriculture more than to garden produce? Yes.

1473. Do the returns you receive from your selection satisfy you as an investment? I would consider it payable.

1474. What labour do you employ? Mostly white men.

1475. What wages do you pay them? I have a man at £90 a year and have to find him. He is married.

1476. Does his wife do anything? Yes; she cooks and he works on the farm.

1477. Have

1477. Have you any other labour besides that? Yes; occasionally I have other labour. I have a Chinaman now. T. Mackay.
15 Jan., 1889.
1478. Altogether do you work your selection by white labour? Mostly; sometimes I employ a Chinaman.
1479. And the result so far satisfies you? I am not perfectly satisfied, but still I consider it payable. We started on a small scale and are gradually increasing our area. It will not be such a small area when we get our land cleared.
1480. *By Mr. King:* How far are you from town? Twelve miles from here (Cairns).
1481. What means have you for bringing in your produce to town? We have good roads; but we always sell it on the ground, and we almost always have a good market.
1482. Are there any more selectors like you in the same locality? No one is growing anything.
1483. What is the reason? The most of the people who took up land never took it up for agricultural purposes.
1484. For what purpose, then? I could not tell; some for timber, and some for cattle, and so on. I am pretty well the only one who has started farming on the inlet. All my neighbours have started very recently.
1485. *By the Chairman:* As you are aware, this Commission is appointed to find out if there is any way by which the sugar industry and tropical agriculture generally can be assisted or encouraged.—Can you offer us any suggestion whereby your agricultural pursuits can be improved? Well, it could be improved if I could get reasonable labour. The wages I am paying are higher than almost any other part of the world.
1486. When you say reasonable labour, do you mean white labour? I could afford to give a good number of white men £40 a year and rations.
1487. Then if you could get white labour, you would not object to pay £40 a year and board? No.
1488. Then at present you cannot find that class of labour in the district? No.
1489. Do you not think that the other opportunities of obtaining higher wages has something to do with the scarcity of labour? I suppose it has. We have no European labour coming in here direct. At present as soon as I get a man and get him into the way of working the farm he leaves.
1490. Have you applied for newly arrived immigrants? I have never got the chance.
1491. If an immigration depot was started in Cairns, and a certain number of immigrants were sent to this port, would they be absorbed by labour being offered them? Yes; that would help me very much, and help others too. If I could get reasonable labour it would help me.
1492. You have not grown fruit in sufficient quantities to send to market? No.
1493. Is any of your land cultivated by Chinese? Yes; the Chinese have twenty acres of my land.
1494. Have any other selectors done the same? Yes; my neighbours have.
1495. Is any quantity of land cultivated by Chinamen in your neighbourhood? Yes; altogether over 200 acres.
1496. What crops do the Chinese grow principally? I may say altogether maize. Nothing else, except a few sweet potatoes for their own use.
1497. What do you consider an average crop of maize? I would say 25 bushels.
1498. Do you find the climate affect the health of yourself and other Europeans at all? I have been in Northern Queensland for seventeen years, and nine years in Cairns. The climate is good, but I cannot do the same amount of work that I could in the south, and the men I employ cannot. Even the horses cannot do the same amount of work.
1499. Have you any objection to tell us what the Chinamen pay as rent for your land? They pay now £1 per acre per annum; but I do not force them. If they have a bad year I do not press them. I consider that they cannot make it pay the rent in my district.
1500. *By Mr. King:* Which is your district? The Inlet. A Chinaman will pay £1 a year for land and work it for himself; but they will not take land when they can get good wages.
1501. *By the Chairman:* Is it good agricultural land? I picked it out nine years ago. It was the very best in the district. I have pretty well the pick of the whole Inlet. There is one thing against it. It is strong land, and nothing will do better than sugar cane. We have very heavy rains at times. We had 50 inches in one week. Nothing will stand that except sugar cane. Once you put sugar in here you may be sure of a crop no matter how dry the season is. But with anything else you have a risk. You may put in a crop and it may not be a good one; a great deal depends on the rains and droughts. If growing an agricultural crop a light soil is the best, but here nearly all the land is strong land.
1502. If there was a central mill in this district would you then put your land under cultivation for sugar? Yes; I would commence and grow cane and sell it at 5s. a ton, if I could sell it on the ground. I would very soon have all my land under cane.
1503. *By Mr. Cowley:* You say that you have had sixty acres under cultivation from time to time. How many have you now under actual cultivation? I have fifteen acres, but I have another fifteen acres getting ready for crop two months from now.
1504. Is your land scrub or forest land? Mixed.
1505. The land under cultivation? Mostly scrub.
1506. Who cleared it? I did.
1507. Your ownself? Yes.
1508. Did you stump it all by yourself? Yes. I paid for it and I helped the labour myself. I have always employed labour.
1509. Was it stumped by contract? No; by weekly labour.
1510. Who were the men who assisted you to do this? Men I employed—mostly Europeans.
1511. Could you tell us what it cost per acre to clear the land—to stump it and clear it? My forest land was very light, nearly all plain; that would cost about £4 an acre to clear; it really for the plough. The scrub land was ordinary average scrub, pretty heavy, and that would cost about £5 an acre to put it under crop first with the hoe, not the plough—that is falling and burning off.
1512. What labour have you now besides this married couple? At the present time a Chinaman. The week before last I had a ploughman, and as soon as he left I got in a Chinaman.
1513. Then it takes three of you to work the fifteen acres you have under crop? No; certainly not. I have done nothing to that myself; besides, as I said, another fifteen acres are being got ready. They have been sowing that fifteen acres and it is finished now, and I will go on to the other land.
1514. Then

- T. Mackay. 1514. Then are those thirty acres that you are dealing with all stumped? Yes, all under the plough.
 1515. What price do you get for corn per bushel? From 3s. 6d. to 4s. That is the average price. That
 15 Jan., 1889. is at my door.
 1516. Is the land let to Chinamen at £1 an acre cleared by your labour, or have they to clear it? They clear the most of it. I did let them forty acres cleared and ready for cultivation, but they have given it up because it did not pay them.
 1517. How many white men have you employed at one time? Generally two or three at the most.
 1518. Do they work satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily? I have got good men. I would not keep a bad man a day. I have generally had good hardworking men. When I did get a bad one I sent him away at once.
 1519. What wages did you pay these men as a rule? For a new chum £1 a week, and for others who have been longer in the district 30s. a week and their rations. The new chums, after their six months is up, always demand 30s.
 1520. Will these men work with the hoe all day long? Yes; at present they do the horse-ploughing. I was cultivating by the hoe for two or three years, and then I had a white man hoeing.
 1521. Did the white man hoe, or had you to get a Chinaman? The white man worked well for me.
 1522. How many Chinamen have you employed at one time? I might have had two, but never more.
 1523. What did they do? Did they do the hard work, or did they all work share and share alike? The Chinamen only did hoc work—nothing else.
 1524. How many crops of maize can you take off the land in one year? My land would take off more than one crop in one year. It would grow a wet-season crop.
 1525. What do you call strong land? Soil with a large percentage of clay. That is the character of mine. It is first-class volcanic soil.
 1526. What experience have you in growing sugar? A few years ago I put in ten or a dozen sorts of sugar cane to see how they would grow, and I had no bad cane at all.
 1527. And that leads you to come to the conclusion that you would be willing to grow cane with white labour and the plough at 5s. a ton? Yes.
 1528. Is that 5s. a ton cut, or standing in the field? Standing in the field.
 1529. After all those years you have been in the district, and taking into consideration the time you have been here, and the money you have expended, has it been a success? The corn alone has not been a success.
 1530. What other business had you? I had a couple of horses on the road, and made money by selling land. We had a lot to learn here. We were in a new climate. I had been used to farming in a temperate climate, and we had a lot to learn, and though it may not have been a success up to the present, I could make it a success now if I had white labour at a reasonable rate.
 1531. And yet Chinamen had to give up the land without paying any rent. The Chinamen could not make it pay. The Chinaman paid me some rent, but I did not force them for the rest.

JOHN ALLAN METCALFE examined :

- J. A. Metcalfe. 1532. *By the Chairman* : You are a selector on the Barron River? Yes. I have taken up land, but the
 15 Jan., 1889. land is not open to selection. I have taken possession of the ground, and have just began to cultivate it.
 1533. What experience have you had? I have had experience on the Mulgrave and Russell Rivers.
 1534. Will you state your experience when on the Mulgrave? My first experience was when I had Dr. Paoli's selection of 1,280 acres, which was given to me gratis. £2,000 was spent on it in buildings, and an attempt made to cultivate tobacco. I attempted three crops of tobacco and lost each one, and then gave it up.
 1534a. *By Mr. King* : What was the cause of the loss of those tobacco crops? Principally excessive wet in the fields. One crop was washed into the earth by a hailstorm.
 1535. *By the Chairman* : What other crops did you grow besides tobacco? After that I took a contract for falling scrub and clearing land. I also wanted to gain all the experience I could. I attempted maize and tobacco, and even vegetables, such as cobs, turnips, and cabbage. I was successful with the maize and the carrots and turnips, but everything else failed like the tobacco.
 1536. What labour did you employ? Principally black labour; a few white men.
 1537. What sort of black labour? Time-expired kanakas, and aboriginals.
 1538. What wages did you pay the time-expired kanakas? £1 a week and I found them.
 1539. How did you remunerate the aboriginals? By giving them very good tucker, tobacco, and clothing.
 1540. Did you make it pay? Well, I made it pay because I had good contracts. I could never have made it pay on the Russell River by simple cultivation.
 1541. I want to know whether you made the agricultural pursuits in which you were engaged pay? No.
 1542. Why did they not pay? No market and want of communication.
 1543. What do you mean by "want of communication"? Although the selection is on the Russell River only one boat comes up once a month, and we had a long way to take the things even then; and there was either very little water in the river or else it was flooded. Then there was no market when I sent the things down. We could hardly send the things to Cairns. The vessel only called at the Russell River on her trip to Townsville, and therefore goods for Cairns had to be carried first to Townsville then back to Cairns before they were discharged.
 1544. Have you grown anything besides what you have stated? Maize. I could have sold it well if I had had communication with this place—Cairns.
 1545. Have you grown any fruit trees? I have planted fruit trees in other places for other people by contract.
 1546. *By Mr. King* : You are well acquainted with the Mulgrave and Russell Rivers? Yes.
 1547. Are the selections on the Mulgrave and Russell River all occupied? No; they are practically abandoned.
 1548. What proportion are abandoned? Every one on which the necessary improvements have been made. All the improvements were made on Dr. Paoli's selection and he had a man on it.
 1549. On all the land made freehold the occupation has ceased? Yes, and the scrub grown up again and the fruit trees are buried.

1550. *By*

1550. *By the Chairman*: When you say that you have taken contracts for planting trees for other people, J.A. Metcalfe have they been for the improvements of selections? Yes.
1551. Then these contracts have been carried out, and certificates of fulfilment of conditions obtained, 15 Jan., 1889. and then the selectors have abandoned their land? Yes. They did not exactly abandon their land, but residence ceased.
1552. Are they absentee proprietors? Nearly all.
1553. Where do they principally reside? I have entered into contracts with people residing in Brisbane and in New South Wales, and one man resides sometimes here and sometimes down south.
1554. What is the average area of the selections? 1,200 acres.
1555. Then practically you have had no experience of your own in agriculture in this district except what you have stated? I have been trying the experience of settling down myself on the upper Barron, and that is where I am located now. I have taken French leave—that is why I am so eager to have the land thrown open for selection. It is upon forest land, and I am sure it will turn out better than the scrub.
1556. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say that on Dr. Paoli's land £2,000 had been spent when it was handed over to you for nothing? Yes.
1557. Had it been cultivated with the plough? No; all with the hoe.
1558. Then the £2,000 was spent in building and clearing? Yes; and on the failure of the tobacco crops. He got a certain amount of money out of the crops.
1559. Did you ever gather any of the tobacco? Only a few pounds.
1560. Then you can give us no experience as to the value of the tobacco? I consider that it was of no value at all. It was too full of water.
1561. Do you not think that that would change as the land was cropped? No; not unless you got a much smaller rainfall. It could never be a success on low lands with a heavy rainfall. Tobacco does not want a heavy rainfall.
1562. Why did you start it? Because I was told by people, who thought they knew, that tobacco was bound to succeed well there, and so it would in a season the same as we are having now, which is exceptional.
1563. You say you employ both white men, aboriginals, and kanakas? Yes.
1564. Did the white men give you any satisfaction? Not the slightest. There was always something the matter with them—they were discontented.
1565. What wages did you pay the white men? From £1 to £2 a week and tucker, and men with those high wages thus were not satisfactory. I never had any stick to me but one, and I have him now.
1566. Have you employed many whites? Perhaps a dozen in all.
1567. You said that you had employed aboriginals—were they satisfactory? Yes; so far I always got on well with them.
1568. Were they worth the food, clothing, and tobacco that you gave them? Yes; certainly.
1569. Did you have many of those men? I have had as many as fifteen working for me at one time, with only myself and one white man.
1570. Did they ever thieve or did they molest you, or do you any harm? Not me personally. They have never taken the value of 1s.
1571. Can you obtain any of these men now? They will not leave their own immediate neighbourhood.
1572. Is not Townsville a better market for produce than this place? It depends upon what the produce is.
1573. For any of the produce that you grow? There is a large market, but you can sell maize at a better price here than in Townsville.
1574. Have any of the absentee proprietors rented their land to anyone? No, no one will rent their land from them.
1575. Then they are losing interest on their investment? Yes.
1576. *By the Chairman*: Have they tried to rent it? Oh, yes.
1577. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are they deriving any benefit from their land at present? No; except increased value.
1578. What rent would they ask for a 1,280 acre selection? Well, one man offered a 1,280 acre selection at a rent of £1 a year for the lot. There was a little humpy on it, and twenty-five or twenty-six acres were cleared and fifteen acres planted with fruit trees, but they had only just been planted.
1579. Was that a freehold? It will be made freehold immediately; the conditions were all fulfilled.
1580. What was the nature of the fruit trees? They were the citron tribe.
1581. Would they bring in a speedy return? They would bear in two years.
1582. How many years could you obtain the land for? I do not know. I never entertained the thought for one moment, because I knew I could not get a living on it.
1583. *By the Chairman*: But if the proprietor has become an absentee, who looks after the trees? No one. I might also add that I know of cases where trees were not only planted on one place, but were taken up and planted on another place.
1584. Then these trees have done double duty, the same as the fencing used to do on the Downs? Yes.
1585. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are you the man who carried out the contract in that case? No, I never used trees twice.
1586. *By the Chairman*: And have these trees been charged as improvements on both properties? Yes. May I be permitted to make a remark or two about kanaka labour?
1587. Yes, certainly? If the sugar planters are to be allowed to recruit kanakas and import kanakas, I want a Government depot for kanakas to be established at Cairns to enable large and small selectors to come into town and get boys when they want them. When a vessel comes in on behalf of the Government with kanakas it should be advertised, so that the small selector could come in and get them the same as planters and farmers, and engage them for twelve months or two years at an increase on the sugar planter's price, which is £6 a year. A selector should be entitled to two, three, four, or five kanakas in accordance to the size of his selection, at say £10 a year, and, of course, board.
1588. Practically you advocate free trade in kanakas either for planters or selectors? No, no; only to be used on the land, not as servants or in any domestic pursuits. All agriculturists, and they alone should have kanakas.

- J.A. Metcalfe. 1589. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are you not aware that selectors have just the same facilities for obtaining the kanakas as the planters have? Yes, but they can't afford to pay a vessel to bring them in. I would be glad to get six kanakas and give them £10 a year each. I have now to give kanakas £1 a week, as there is a sort of union amongst them.
- 15 Jan., 1889. 1590. Do you not know that all small farmers can, by applying to the Government, engage kanakas exactly in the same way as the planters? I do not know that.
1591. Men on the Herbert River do so? Indeed!
1592. Do you want them for tropical agriculture? Yes, certainly; only to be used on a farm.
1593. Are you aware that the system you now propose in regard to kanakas is in direct contravention of the Polynesian Act? You said we could do so now.
1594. No; you must make application before the vessel leaves, and a bond has to be entered into. I advise you to buy the Polynesian Act. There is nothing to prevent you getting men the same as the planter? That is, if I apply before the vessel sails.

ARTHUR MEARS examined:

- A. Mears. 1595. *By the Chairman*: Where do you reside? Herberton.
1596. Can you furnish us with the area of land under crops there? Well, I can't give the exact areas.
- 15 Jan., 1889. I sent an urgent wire to Herberton to-day, and I received the following statistical information:—

"Herberton, 15th January, 1889.

"To A. Mears, Cairns:

"During the past year 20 land applications were approved of, area 16,000 acres. Since the beginning of selection here about 90,000 acres have been selected, of (which approximately) 60,000 are occupied. The following average results have been obtained:—Maize, from 10 to 60 bushels to the acre; oats (all cut for hay), from 1 to 4 tons per acre; potatoes, from 1½ tons to 12 tons per acre; lucerne, five crops can be cut in one year—it grows luxuriantly and yields immense crops. A trial crop of wheat went 42 bushels to the acre; fruit—grapes, oranges, nectarines, cherries, plums, mulberries, peaches, &c.—all succeed and are now bearing fine crops. The only difficulty in the way of hay-making is the moisture of the season at the time of cutting. Point out to the Commissioners that the land between the Evelyn and Carrington, and from Evelyn south, is all fitted for close settlement, and is well watered by permanent streams, and it only requires to be thrown open to attract a large population.

"(Signed) J. H. GREEN."

He is the editor of the *Herberton Advertiser*. Part of this information is obtained from last year's returns. I might explain in reference to the average maize yields, which is put down at from 10 to 60 bushels, that it has been the experience of selectors that when the land is first put under cultivation it does not produce a good crop for a season or two. At first the maize runs to stalk 12 or 14 feet high. The land is too rich in the first place. After the land has been cropped once or twice, they get better returns than for their first crop.

1597. Have the selectors a tolerably fair market for their produce? Yes.
1598. What would they get per pound for grapes? 1s. 6d. At present time the grapes are very heavy. This is the finest crop they have had.
1599. What is the area under grapes? It is impossible to say.
1600. How long have they been planted? During the past three or four years.
1601. How long have you been in Herberton yourself? Five years.
1602. Have you seen any of these crops growing? Yes; at Carrington, five miles from Herberton, I have seen sugarcane and wheat grow side by side.
1603. In the winter time do you have any frosts at Herberton? Yes, in Herberton itself; but the scrub land is about four or six miles from Herberton. There is a range to be crossed, and it is south of Herberton where the large area of agricultural land is situated.
1604. At present are the farmers able to dispose of their produce in the immediate neighbourhood of where it is grown? Some of them sell some of their produce to Chinamen, and the Chinamen hawk it round town. Europeans seem to have an objection to taking their produce round from house to house.
1605. Is that the case with grapes? Yes.
1606. In what way do you think the Commission could assist the selectors in Herberton? I think the greatest difficulties the selectors suffer under at present, and which they complain of most, are the depredations of the blacks and the want of better means of communication between Herberton and Cairns. The railway will give them this communication, and that is what the selectors are anxiously waiting for at present. The selectors who have taken up land in the midst of the scrub find it very difficult to get into the main roads that communicate with Herberton. It is only by cutting a track that they are able to reach the main road.

1607. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say that there are 90,000 acres taken up? Yes.
1608. Does the Board not levy rates? Yes.
1609. Then what does the Divisional Board do with the money? Do they make roads? Yes; but the Tinaroo Division is a very large one. The amount of the rate last year was between £900 and £1,000, which with the Government endowment represented £3,000. But you must not forget the nature of the country, which makes road-making very costly. The district is very mountainous, and parts of the road are washed away every wet season; and it is a considerable expense to keep the roads open for traffic.
1610. Do the selectors work their selections themselves or lease them to Chinese? Some work the whole of the selections themselves, others work a part and lease a part to Chinamen. A selector takes up 160 acres of scrub land, clears the scrub off about twenty acres on which he resides and cultivates, and he then sublets a portion of his selection to Chinamen on a clearing lease at a small rental of 1s. per acre per annum, the Chinamen having to clear the land. At the expiration of the lease the land reverts to the original holder, by which time he is in a position to cultivate it himself. The greatest difficulty which I think the settlers have to contend with is the depredations of the aborigines. It is positively impossible for a selector to leave his place even for a few hours without the chance of the blacks coming in and robbing him of everything they can lay hold of. An instance happened last Tuesday. A young man came from the south and took up a selection at the back of a township about nine miles from Herberton. He arrived from Port Douglas yesterday week. He brought up a considerable quantity of goods which he wanted on his selection. He put all the goods into his house, fastened it up, and came into town on

Tuesday

Tuesday to do some business with my firm. Upon his return home in the afternoon he found that the blacks had smashed open one of the windows, entered the house and carried off about £15 worth of rations, and scattered the other things all over the place. Many of these selectors are very poor men, and it comes really very hard upon them that they should be continually robbed and that there should be no means of redress.

A. Mears.
15 Jan., 1889.

1611. How many of these 90,000 acres are under cultivation? I could not tell you. Upon every selection there is a certain amount of cultivation. A selector takes up 160 acres, and at first start clears 20 acres—perhaps half of that is under cultivation.

1612. *By Mr. King*: But all these 90,000 acres are not taken up in 160-acre blocks? No, the largest are 1,280 acres. The most of the land is very scrubby, and it takes a considerable time before the selectors can make the land fit for cultivation.

1613. What is the average rate of wages for a farm labourer? £2 a week and tucker, or £3 a week and they find themselves.

1614. *By the Chairman*: Are there many farm labourers employed at that rate of wages? Not many. Most of the selectors work their farms with the assistance of their families, if they have any.

1615. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is the climate good? Yes, very good.

1616. *By the Chairman*: You have no coloured labour in Herberton? No, all Chinamen. The Chinese in almost every case, I think, work for themselves; they are not employed by Europeans.

1617. *By Mr. King*: Is the climate healthy for Europeans? Yes. Nearly the whole of the agricultural land is watered by permanent running streams.

1618. *By the Chairman*: Are you engaged in business in Herberton? Yes, as a general commission agent. We do a lot of business for farmers in the district.

1619. *By Mr. King*: Has any attempt been made to extend the cultivation of produce? Has wheat been tried on a large scale? Yes; one man has 1,000 fruit trees on his selection, and next year he expects to have 500 more, and at present he has some tons of grapes of a very fine quality. Wheat has only been tried experimentally, when it gave 42 bushels to the acre.

1620. *By the Chairman*: Is there any rust in the wheat? No.

1621. What is the character of the soil? Chocolate in the scrub, covered to a considerable depth with vegetable matter. European fruits appear to do very well, there being a distinct winter season. For six months during the winter we have frost frequently, and on five or six occasions we have had ice in winter. So the fruit trees receive a distinct check.

1622. What is the height of Herberton above the level of the sea? 3,000 feet.

1623. When the railway is completed to the top of the range it will bring Herberton into easy access with the port here? Yes. When the railway is completed from Cairns to Herberton it will run through the whole of this land I have been describing excepting that to the south of Herberton, and it will give them facilities which they have not at present.

1624. *By Mr. Cowley*: How near to Herberton does the scrub land between Geraldton and Herberton approach? About seven or eight miles.

1625. Have you any experience of that land? Is it actually as good as the land you describe? It is very good. For twelve or fifteen miles from Herberton this land is admirably adapted for settlement. It is fairly level country.

1626. Have you ever been down the range to Geraldton? No, I have not. I have been in the scrub, but not through it.

1627. Then you know nothing about the range between Geraldton and Herberton? No; excepting what I have heard from men who have been there frequently. They said that there was a gradual ascent from a few miles out of Geraldton until within eight or nine miles of Herberton. The land is all good agricultural land.

WEDNESDAY, 16 JANUARY, 1889.

CAIRNS DISTRICT.

(At Stratford.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

I. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

THOMAS BEHAN examined.

1628. *By the Chairman*: You are carrying on business under the name of Thomas Behan and Co.? T. Behan.

Yes.

1629. As rice manufacturers? Yes; as rice millers.

1630. Do you grow rice yourself? I did last year.

1631. How many acres have you grown? Twenty acres.

1632. What was the yield per acre? About 48 bushels of paddy, equal to 40 bushels to the ton.

1633. What is the value of paddy? £8 10s. delivered at the mill. It runs from £8 10s. to £9 10s.

according to the quality.

1634. What labour do you employ in growing rice? Kanakas, Chinamen, and white men.

1635. How many acres do you allow per man employed? About five acres.

1636. What wages do you pay them? Fifteen shillings to £1 for some overtime kanakas, with board.

1637. Where do you get your supply of paddy from to keep the mill going? From Cairns and Port

Douglas. I purchase it from the growers, who are principally Chinamen.

1638. How many mouths during the year is your mill going? It has been going now since July last.

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1639. How

16 Jan., 1889.

- T. Behan. 1639. How many tons of rice can you clean and dress in a day? I can at present dress one ton per day.
- 16 Jan., 1889. 1640. Can you get sufficient paddy in the district to keep the mill going? Yes; I can if I have the money to pay for it.
1641. Is your dressed rice marketable? Yes. We have only one bag in stock.
1642. What price do you get for No. 1 rice? £23 10s. per ton wholesale; and No. 2 is sold at from £18 to £18 10s.
1643. Then you can dispose of all you dress? Yes. There were about 7,756,206 pounds of rice consumed in Queensland in 1886, representing a value of £49,000, while the duty collected on rice for the same period was £29,623. That was for 1886; at present the duty has reached £32,000 a year.
1644. Is the land about this district and Port Douglas adapted for the growth of rice? The low land in the district of Port Douglas, and all the land from Ingham to Cooktown, is well adapted for rice. That is because the rainfall is at present so high—it is from 10 feet to 12 feet per annum.
1645. Who are the parties principally growing rice? The majority are Chinamen. There are white men who are growing rice. It is only really from the past twelve to eighteen months that anything was known of rice—that is, since Mr. Walker and myself went and tried it ourselves.
1646. Do they grow it on their own land or on leased land? On land leased from Europeans. The Chinamen really introduced the industry. They first of all grew it at the Hep Wah Plantation, and manufactured it there with a little dolly machine. There were about forty of these dolly machines in Port Douglas and this district, and the Chinamen came to me and offered to put down £1,000 to help me if I would put up a mill. It then struck me that it was quite good enough for me to go into it myself, and the result is that the mill is where you see it. Before the mill was erected there was not half the quantity of rice grown that there is now, because now there is a sale for it. Before, they really did not know what it was, or if they did they had no market for it. Now that the industry is started, the whole of the Chinamen and Europeans are ploughing up their land, and a great many of them are going in for it, and a few are at it now. In a short time, in a few years, our rice in the North will be the same to us as your wheat is in the South: it will suit the climate.
1647. What is the yield of paddy per acre? In the Cairns district there were 95 acres under rice, which gave an average yield of 50·42 bushels to the acre; in the Cook district there were 60 acres, which gave 37·33 bushels to the acre; in the Port Douglas district there were 292 acres, which gave an average yield of 36·73 bushels to the acre.
1648. By Mr. King: Has the husk of the rice any marketable value? Yes; for fodder. The price varies a good deal; it is worth from 2s. to 3s. per bushel. It all depends what price fodder is per ton down South.
1649. By the Chairman: Do those averages refer to one crop per season? Yes; just for the rainy season. By irrigating we could get three crops.
1650. Then the bulk of the paddy is at present grown by Chinamen? Yes.
1651. But Europeans are more and more learning to cultivate it? Yes; the industry is only two or three years old.
1652. You are about to extend your operations by forming your mill into a company? Yes; the company proposes to start the same line of operations as Harper and Co., of Brisbane—purely manufacturing; and besides rice will manufacture pepper, coffee, and so on, and of course will also encourage the growth of those tropical plants, and growers will have some place to send them to. At present there is no place to send it to. The company is started to purchase these things in connection with their rice milling; also to encourage rice-growing and the growing of those things I have mentioned. The company will lend money to farmers to assist them, just the same as an ordinary flour milling company.
1653. You are a surveyor by profession, and have surveyed many of the selections in the Port Douglas and Cairns district? With very few exceptions I have surveyed nearly all of them; and I am, therefore, acquainted with the character of the soil, &c., as I have been eight years in the North.
1654. Is the soil of the various selections adapted for the growth of rice and coffee? Of the growth of coffee, I do not know anything about; but the principal part of the land round the rivers is adapted for rice. In the mangrove swamp, through which you passed, there are some thousands of acres of clear patches which are very suitable for rice. They are all covered with water once a month, at the spring tide. I experimented on it by digging a trench and putting a bank up round a quarter-of-an-acre and planted it with rice, and after the rain was over I had one of the best crops of rice you could wish to see—the best I ever saw in my life. All these salt-pans, by putting a little dam round them and keeping out the salt water and by ploughing them, could be turned into some of the finest rice fields in the world. If the Government cut their mangrove swamps up and threw them open for selection every one would go off and be a revenue to the Government.
1655. Then from Ingham to Cooktown there is sufficient land which, if put under rice cultivation, would supply the whole of Queensland? Yes; but it would take years to do it. The scrub can't be cleared off in a day.
1656. Then every year the supply would increase? Yes, it is increasing now.
1657. Has this been a gradual increase? Three years ago there was not a ton grown, and now there are something like 600 or 700 tons of rice grown.
1658. You say that you cultivated twenty acres, and it takes one man to every four acres; is that land under plough? No; it has been cleared for four or five years.
1659. What is the mode of cultivating this land? Previous to my cultivating it the Chinamen had leased the land and it was very clean, therefore very little labour was required to keep it clean. There was no scrub to cut down, and if I was to plant in the same quantity of scrub land it would take four times the number of men to cultivate it.
1660. How do you plant the rice? There are two ways. One way is to scatter it the same as wheat. The other is by planting small tussocks of it, and that takes a lot of labour to keep clean. The other way is the same as wheat, and there is no labour after planting—that is, of course, on ploughed land. On scrub land you could not do that.
1661. Allowing one man to four acres, would he cut it as well as plant it? I do not say that one man could do four acres including cutting, because when the rice is ripening it might ripen in one or two days, and the

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the longer it is on the stock after it is ripe the less you will get. It is so heavy after it ripens that it will fall to the ground unless picked quickly. Two or three extra hands have to be put on at that time.

1662. *By Mr. King*: If you cultivated by the plough, would one man be able to cultivate twenty acres? Yes. I happened to be at Mr. Walker's, and saw his rice crops and his mode of cultivating it; and that is the only payable way of doing it—that is, by ploughing the land and scattering the seed broadcast and reaping it the same as oats. It is cut with a sickle, and thrashed on the field. A field-harvester, I believe, would do—that is, a harvester that would cut and thrash and bag it. I believe with strong rice—not the swamp rice—that it would cut just as well as wheat.

1663. *By Mr. Cowley*: From your own experience what kind of labour is most suitable for rice growing? Chinamen, in a small way. When the wet season is on you can't get a white man to stop out in the rain, and you have to get a Chinaman or kanaka to assist. I have proved that here. The white man says, "I am not going to stop out in this," and everything goes to the dogs. I have engaged white men, and they would work for a week or two, and then perhaps draw their wage and clear.

1664. You say that some Chinamen offered to put £1,000 into the mill if you started it. Is there any Chinese capital in it now? No; none.

1665. You said that forty bushels of paddy went to the ton? Yes. That gives 56 lbs. to the bushel. That is the recognised way of counting it; I do not know if it is the standard weight.

1666. How much rice can you get for a ton of paddy? 12½ cwt., but not all No. 1 rice.

1667. Do you thrash your rice by machine here? It is all brought to me in paddy.

1668. Is the straw utilised? At the present time, no. It is as suitable for fodder as oaten hay, and it would add to the profit of the grower. It could be made into chaff. It has in some instances been made into chaff. The teamsters on the Herbert road go in for it very much.

1669. How much land have you alongside the mill? Three acres lease land. I have had no consideration either from one Government or the other. I tried to get the land put up to auction and let me have it for fee-simple, instead of paying £5 a year rent. There are five acres, and they have made me pay £35 rent. When I applied for a lease I was told that the Chinese rented land from the Crown at £5 an acre, and they would not give it to me for anything less. It is eighteen months or two years since I wrote, and the other day when in Brisbane I got some friends to see the Minister for Lands with me and they have now decided to put the land up to auction. But the Commissioner has been instructed to value the improvements that have been put up at my expense. The bank would not give me assistance while the land was only leasehold, as it was not a good security.

1670. Are there any sites available on the river frontage? No; the rest of the land available is reserved as a police paddock. The land is not alienated at all.

1671. Are there no more available mill sites? No, except what I have said.

1672. Is the land accessible? No.

1673. Is there much forest land? Yes, for about half-a-mile down the river, and there you get into the mangroves.

1674. Then that half-mile would supply more mill sites? Yes, either up higher or lower down.

1675. Is it all in the hands of the Government? Yes.

1676. Do you know many of the farmers in this district? I believe I have visited nearly every farm in this district.

1677. Is there much maize grown here? Yes, several hundred tons.

1678. Who grows it on the selections between Cairns and Alley's? The whole of the cultivation in that district is principally done by Chinamen.

1679. *By the Chairman*: Is that cultivation outside of sugar? Yes; either vegetables or corn.

1680. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are these homestead selectors who take up land and lease it to Chinamen? Yes; it is the only thing to do with it. They are in such a position that they can't afford to pay for labour like a sugar planter. The kanakas cost about £25 to land, and a poor selector can't afford to pay that at the present time. If you had labour costing about £10 as it used to be in the old days, you would find that all agricultural industries round here would flourish. They will not flourish with white men.

1681. *By the Chairman*: What do you mean? I mean if it only cost £10 for passage money, then we could get eight or nine boys. Look at Bundaberg—all the Germans employ kanakas and make a good living. Unless you have labour you can't do anything, and it must be cheap. If the land was not leased to Chinamen it would be still scrub.

1682. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is the corn used here in the district? The plantations take the corn, and it is also sent to Townsville and Herberton. This is one of the principal agricultural districts in the North. Townsville takes a great deal of corn. We export corn and other products.

1683. Would it not pay the selector to employ white men to cultivate for them, seeing that they have such a good market? I do not know whether it would pay, but I do not see a mau doing it.

1684. *By the Chairman*: Not one? There are very few cultivating corn themselves.

1685. Then in view of the present Chinese Restriction Act, if those Chinamen gradually disperse there will be no cultivation in the district? They will leave the land after them so that you can put the plough into it. It will take five years to clear the land, and if the Chinamen leave the country the land will be in such a state that the white mau will be able to put the plough into it. That is as far as cultivation is concerned at present.

1686. Then the more the Chinamen break the scrub up the better it will be by-and-by for the white race? Yes.

1687. Then in course of time it will come about that the entire white population here will be engaged in agricultural pursuits? Yes; that is what it is coming to now every day.

1688. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you found any disease attack the rice in any way? Is it a crop that can be relied on? If you have rice and water you can depend on the rice for a crop. If you have no rain you have no crop. There is no disease that I am aware of in my experience.

1689. Is there any enemy to the crop? They say that there is. They say that the grub got into it in Jones's selection at Port Douglas. We have nothing of that sort down here. I am only speaking of what I have seen.

1690. So far as your experience goes it is a reliable crop, and the farmer can rely on getting £9 per ton for paddy in return for their labour? Yes; and by irrigation they could get two or three crops in the year.

1691. *By*

- T. Behan. 1691. *By the Chairman*: You said, just now, that Europeans working in a rice field and heavy rain coming on they refuse to remain in the field? Yes.
- 16 Jan., 1889. 1692. What particular work have you to be done in the field when it is raining heavily? Chipping weeds.
1693. That has to be done whether the rain is falling or the sun shining? Yes; because after a day's rain the weeds are just as bad as ever. You have to keep at it all the time.
1694. Then to cultivate it properly it would be better to sow it as Mr. Walker does? Yes; that is the proper way of doing it, if it is possible, not in drills; but in five rows out of six you cannot do it here.
1695. *By Mr. Cowley*: Where the land is full of stumps how do you do it? We dibble it in. All that has to be done by hand labour.
1696. *By the Chairman*: Do you think that if an experimental farm were started in the Cairns district, by which experiments could be made on the part of the State to ascertain what this district is capable of growing, it would be beneficial to the district? Yes; that is a thing that I believe in. I believe I was the first to agitate for a State nursery up here. It is just the thing that we northerners require. We have nobody to teach us how to grow these plants, and do not know what plants they are. Most of us have been in North Queensland all our lives, and we want some one to instruct us; and instead of land lying idle without any fruit trees or tropical plants growing on it, if we had a nursery and were shown how to grow those things we would do so instead of having to waste long years teaching ourselves. We simply want a tropical nursery here, and I may say this much, that the tropical nursery which we were promised for Cairns we have not got yet. It is four or five months since it was gazetted; since then no steps have been taken. The wet season is here and the scrub ought to have been cut down.
1697. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you not think it would be much better to have an experimental farm than a nursery by which trees could be cultivated and brought to maturity and their products made marketable? Yes; a farm on that principle is what I want.
1698. Then people could go to the experimental farm and see things growing before them, and obtain other plants as well? Yes; you want a nursery in connection with it, because you will either have to give the plants away or sell them and make it self-supporting.
1699. If this experimental farm were started do you think that white men would work it—that it could be carried on satisfactorily with white labour? That all depends.
1700. If white men are paid high wages will they work? I do not know. Money is very tempting, and it all depends on the class of men you get. I could not give an opinion as to what class of labour an experimental farm would require. It would want a good man at the head of it who is thoroughly acquainted with tropical production. You could not get white men to work with the hoe.
1701. Do you think it would be feasible to work a good farm here with prison labour, with a first-class man in charge? Yes; prison labour is a class of labour that the Government ought to go in for more than they do.
1702. Do you think that prisoners if employed could make the place self-supporting, by selling plants at a low rate? Yes. The idea never struck me, but it is a very good one, and the best suggestion for working these experimental farms.
1703. Would the people in the neighbourhood object to this being done? I do not think they would.
1704. Do you think that the extent of good they would receive from it would induce them to look favourably on the idea? Yes.
1705. If this company is started would you buy chillies to make pepper? I would buy anything. I am going in for a rice mill, a pepper mill, a mustard mill, and all those things, the same as is done in Melbourne. The chillies grow wild here.
1706. You would be prepared to take pepper or spice of any kind? Yes; that is what the company is for.

WILLIAM WALTER MASON examined:

- W. W. Mason. 1707. *By the Chairman*: You are a selector on the Barron River? Yes.
- 16 Jan., 1889. 1708. What is the extent of your selection? 160 acres.
1709. Homestead? Yes.
1710. How long have you held it? Five and a-half years.
1711. How many acres are under cultivation? 130 acres.
1712. What do you chiefly grow? Maize principally, bananas, rice, sweet potatoes, and English potatoes. I have no oranges yet, but I have 130 trees in the ground. This is the first year they commenced to bear.
1713. What is your average crop of maize? About 1 ton to the acre—that is 40 bushels.
1714. What price do you get per bushel? £8 per ton, and as high as £10, never lower than £6 15s.
1715. What do the bananas yield per acre in bunches? About three bunches to every plant, and there are 320 or 330 plants to the acre—that is about 900 bunches per acre now. When you plant them at first you only get one bunch to the plant; but after they have been in eighteen months, the yield is on an average three bunches.
1716. Do you sell the bananas on the ground? Delivered at the wharf, fifty yards from the house.
1717. What do they average? They have been as low as 8d., and as high as 1s. 3d.; the average is 11d.
1718. What quantity of rice have you grown? Last year there were thirty acres under rice.
1719. What was the yield? It averaged thirty bushels to the acre—that is scarcely a ton. Some of it was very poor crop.
1720. What did you get for your paddy? 35 10s. per ton.
1721. Delivered? Delivered.
1722. Have you a ready market for all you can grow of all your products on this selection? Yes, with the exception of bananas. There is a period of the year when you can't sell them at all, and have to give them to the pigs. During about two months of the year you can sell any amount at a good price. For the past three weeks I have not sold any at all.
1723. Have you ever tried to preserve them by the new process of drying them? No.
1724. What labour do you employ on this selection? Chiefly Chinese.

1725. What

1725. What do you pay them? 30s. a week, and they find themselves. There are a few kanakas.
1726. Is the selection paying a profit? The most of it is leased to Chinese, and they pay £1 an acre.
1727. Do the Chinese grow the products you have named? Yes.
1728. *By Mr. King*: How much have you in your own hands? Six or seven acres, principally bananas and fruit trees.
1729. Do the Chinese make money out of it, and do you make money out of it, any more than a living? Do you mean what I grow myself?
1730. *By the Chairman*: Are you saving money out of it, or is it only a bare living? It is more than a bare living.
1731. Have you had to borrow money to carry on the selection? No, not 6d.; it is entirely free from debt.
1732. *By Mr. King*: By whom was the land cleared? By Chinese.
1733. What did you pay for clearing? When I came here I paid £3 12s. 6d. for cutting the scrub alone and 30s. more for burning it. That is four years ago, and by the time you put the crops in it will cost you £9 or £10 an acre. After it is cleared the grass grows up again and it has to be chipped again.
1734. What do the Chinamen pay you? £1 an acre for five years and they clear it.
1735. Have you made any experiment in the growth of any other product except maize, bananas, and rice? I tried tobacco; in fact, there is a tobacco manufactory now on this selection.
1736. What is the result of tobacco cultivation here? I believe the cultivation was profitable, but the manufacturing was not a success.
1737. Was the leaf of good quality that you tried to manufacture? I was told so.
1738. Had it been examined by anyone who could say it was of good quality? Not that I am aware of.
1739. How was the manufacture a failure? I believe because the manufacturer had not sufficient capital to carry it on.
1740. *By the Chairman*: Did you have any tobacco destroyed owing to the continued wet weather? No.
1741. You say you grow English potatoes? Yes.
1742. Do they grow successfully? Yes, in August, September, and October.
1743. What was the average yield per acre? Three tons, and we got £7 per ton, and sold all we grew.
1744. What did you get for sweet potatoes? I did not sell any of them; the Chinamen sold them, and sold them for £1 10s. to £3 a ton according to the season.
1745. *By Mr. King*: Have you tried coffee? No.
1746. *By Mr. Cowley*: How many crops of maize can you grow per annum? Three crops in fourteen months.
1747. Is that on the same land? Yes, it is never out of cultivation.
1748. Can you grow rice after maize and *vice versa*? Yes the Chinese do it frequently.
1749. How many crops of rice can you get in twelve months? One.
1750. Then your land is continually under crops? Yes.
1751. Have you any system of rotation of crops, or do you grow the same crops twice running? We chiefly grew the same crops running. The rice is sown in beds and replanted afterwards.
1752. Is that more expensive than sowing broadcast? I never saw Chinamen sow broadcast. They dig a hole and put a few grains into it, and if too much comes up, transplant some of it. They have a long stick with a sharp point, with which they make a hole into which they drop the seeds.
1753. *By Mr. King*: Do you think that Europeans could work in the field the same as the Chinamen do here? Whether they would or whether they could work, do you mean?
1754. Whether they would? I offered my ground to Europeans and they would not take it. They said, "We can't cut scrub for you." They added, "We would be foolish to cut scrub for you when we can get land of our own."
1755. Would Europeans be able to do the work that the Chinese do, or if they could would they? I think they would not even if they could. There is too much better employment open for them.
1756. What kind of employment? Railway work, navvying, timber getting, and work under the Divisional Board.
1757. Have all these higher wages than farm labourers would expect? They are all paid higher wages than we can afford to give them.
1758. We were told that Europeans would not work in the rain; did you ever try it? Yes; it is impossible to work in the rain.
1759. Do Chinese or kanakas work in the rain? Kanakas will, but Chinese do not as a rule—that is when they are working for themselves.
1760. *By Mr. Cowley*: You said that you had kanakas here; are they in your personal employment or on leased land? They are time-expired boys under my personal inspection.
1761. Did you engage them from the Polynesian Protector? No.
1762. How much do you pay these men? The lowest is 15s. a week, and the highest £1 a week, and I find them in rations.
1763. Do you clothe them and give them rations? No clothing—rations.
1764. Have you ever paid their return passage to the previous employer? No.
1765. You say you have leased your land to Chinamen for five years? After expiration of their lease do you intend to re-let it to them? I can't say; I do not know.
1766. Do you make more by leasing this land to Chinamen at £1 an acre than if you cultivated it yourself? Yes, far more; that is when the scrub is on it.
1767. *By the Chairman*: But after the scrub has been cleared, and the land placed in a state of cultivation as we see it here now, would you re-let it again at £1 per acre? No, not at £1.
1768. *By Mr. King*: What rent would you ask for it? 30s.
1769. *By the Chairman*: Then the Chinamen keep the land in a good state of cultivation all the year round? Yes.
1770. Is there any sign of the soil exhausting itself here? Not at present, and I have had it under cultivation for four years.
1771. Has it been bearing two or three crops a year during that time? Yes.
1772. Is any manure placed on the ground? None whatever.
1773. Then you entirely depend on nature? Yes.

- W. W. Mason. 1773a. *By Mr. King*: Doyon think that the inefficient means of shipping fruit affects the price you get for bananas? I do. I have had experience of it for four years. The "Victory" was to sail from Cairns on a Tuesday and I sent in bananas by boat, and it was not until the following Friday that they went away, and they were laying all that time in the bay in the sun.
- 16 Jan., 1889. 1774. *By Mr. Cowley*: What was the result of the shipment? I lost money by it. If we could induce a company to run swift steamers to carry bananas between ports, and have accommodation for bananas, it would pay very well.
1775. *By Mr. King*: And would double the value of the bananas? It would, and would not only give a lift to agriculture, but pay the boat.
1776. *By Mr. Cowley*: If there was a certainty of the bananas being landed at their destination in good condition, would it pay the grower of the fruit? Certainly it would.
1777. Do you buy any corn from Chinamen? Yes, but not all of it.
1778. And you make a profit by buying and selling? Yes, and by carting it with my own team.
1779. Do you buy any of the fruit they grow? No, they ship their own bananas.
1780. Do you buy their rice? They sell it direct to Mr. Behan.
1781. What else do you buy? English potatoes.
1782. Those all help you to make a living? Yes.
1783. Do you think you could have brought this place to the state it is in without the assistance of the Chinese? No, I am certain I could not; without them it would still have been the natural scrub.
1784. How do your orange trees do? They have been in two years and are healthy. I had no trouble in rearing them. A kind of black blight got into the trees, but I put soft soap and sulphur on them. I also put on flour. The flour is made into a paste and boiled, and the sulphur is then mixed up with it, and the soft soap put in and all mixed together, and then spread over the trees with a brush. It is very efficacious. It destroys the blight and does not injure the tree.
1785. Is this soil suited for the cultivation of oranges? Yes, as far as my experience goes.
1786. Are all your orange trees grafted? Yes, and have been in two years from planting.
1787. *By the Chairman*: After your experience here during the past five or six years, both in growing and in shipping fruit to the southern markets, have any suggestions occurred to you by which your industry could be improved? As I mentioned before, if the steamers were faster and better fitted for fruit;—I have nothing further than that.
1788. Can the mode of transit from here to Cairns be improved? Yes, by a punt across the river towards Lillybank, so as to get my produce to the railway.
1789. *By Mr. Cowley*: In the event of the Chinese leaving the district what labour would you use? The kanaka is the most suitable, I fancy.
1790. Could you carry on with white labour at present prices? No; I do not believe I could make a living by employing white labour at present prices.
1791. *By Mr. King*: Have you grown any sugar cane? Yes. There is one thing about cane different from other things, and it is this. Cane will grow without any trouble whatever. I planted an acre of cane on new scrub ground, and it only wants chipping and keeping the weeds down. It is growing now as when first planted.
1792. Suppose there was a central sugar mill here, at what price could you sell your cane? I have had no experience.
1793. How many tons do you think an acre would give as a crop? About 60 tons. That is merely a surmise.
1794. What length are the canes? It is a large red cane.
1795. *By the Chairman*: You have leased twenty acres to Ah Dick and four men with him? Yes.
1796. And the return you have handed to me of the produce of the twenty acres you can of your own personal knowledge say to be correct? Yes. I carted it all.
1797. And this return is as follows? Yes; as follows:—February 22nd, 7 tons 2 bags maize; April 9, 5 tons; April 10th, 4 tons; June 29th, 4 tons 8 bags; August 9th, 7 tons; August 13th, 6 tons 6 bags; October 26th, 6 tons; December 23rd, 9 tons 9 bags; December 27th, 3 tons 5 bags; total, 54 tons maize, averaging £8 per ton = £432. Bananas, £72; rice (3 tons), £25; English potatoes (3 tons at £7), £21; grand total for 20 acres, £550. This was taken off the land in twelve months by six men. Four of these were partners, and they engaged two Chinese labourers.
1798. *By Mr. Cowley*: On an average six men only were employed? Yes.
1799. Including the partners? Yes.
1800. *By the Chairman*: Are all the other Chinamen attended by the same success as Ah Dick? No, not all; but there is very little difference. They are all satisfied with the produce of their own land.

(At Double Island.)

JAMES JAMIESON examined:

- J. Jamieson. 1801. *By the Chairman*: What is the name of this estate? Mount Buchan.
1802. Who are the owners of it? Dr. Blair, Mr. W. Behan, and myself.
- 16 Jan., 1889. 1803. You are the manager? Yes.
1804. How many acres have you? 5,000 freehold and 3,000 leasehold.
1805. How many acres are under cultivation? Thirteen acres under cocoanut.
1806. What number of cocoanut trees have you on these thirteen acres? 6,000 originally, but now 5,700.
1807. How long have they been on the ground? Five years at the longest.
1808. Are they now fruiting? Yes.
1809. Where did you get the seed from? Principally from New Guinea.
1810. Is the seed readily obtainable? Yes.
1811. Are there any varieties different from, or better than others? There are different varieties here, but as to which is the best, I cannot speak. They were obtained from different islands.
1812. Do you think that the cultivation of the cocoanut is likely to prove a profitable industry? Yes, I think so.
1813. Can it be used in various ways? Yes.
1814. Can

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1814. Can the fibre be utilised? Yes.
1815. Do you know that it has been? Yes.
1816. Have you had experience of growing coconuts in other places than in Queensland? No.
1817. *By Mr. Cowley*: What amount of labour does it require to keep the thirteen acres of coconuts in order after planted? It takes two Chinamen. During the dry season it does not want so much attention, but during the wet season, for about six months in the year, there is a considerable amount of work.
1818. *By Mr. King*: When the trees get big will they require as much labour? No.
1819. *By Mr. Cowley*: What distance apart do you plant the trees? Eighteen feet by eighteen feet.
1820. Do you think that is a good and profitable distance? Yes, I think so; I planted them fifteen feet by fifteen at first, but finding that was too close I increased the distance to eighteen feet.
1821. And are the trees, so far as they have gone, thriving well? Yes.
1822. Any disease? No disease.
1823. Could you give us any ideas as to the cost per acre for planting? The heaviest cost of planting was the getting of the nuts. I sent a boat to New Guinea for them. They cost me 1s. each, and over 30 per cent. did not grow.
1824. Under ordinary circumstances what is the cost? You ought to get them for 4d. each from Fiji. I paid three times that amount. The cost of planting them was very small, if in new scrub as with me. I did not burn all clear at first, I did so three years afterwards. It does not hurt the coconuts.
1826. Did you plant them in their permanent positions at first? No; I planted them in a nursery; that is the best way.
1827. How long is it from the time of planting until you can expect a return? They will fruit here four years afterwards. That is five years after putting the nut in the ground; but it takes twelve months for them to ripen. It is six years before I get any return at all.
1828. About what would the value of the first picking be on the sixth year? I could hardly say; I could only compare it with the value down at the islands and what I saw there.
1829. You could not form any estimate at present? No, I could not.
1830. As you have been on the islands, do you think that your trees compare favourably with those on the islands? Yes, they are much superior, and I think that is due to cultivation. They grow more than they do on the islands.
1831. *By the Chairman*: Is any part of the estate under sugar? Not at present, but it has been.
1832. How much? 250 acres.
1833. Can sugarcane be grown on it? Yes.
1834. You have had some experience in sugar? Yes, six years.
1835. *By Mr. King*: Did you get good crops here? Yes.
1836. What was the reason that you gave it up? The labour was too expensive. As soon as I got the plants in I discharged all hands, and the cane remained without anybody to cultivate it.
1837. *By Mr. Cowley*: Was it your intention to work this estate as a sugar plantation? Yes, £5,000 was spent on it with that intention.
1838. Was the reason you mentioned the only reason why it was abandoned? Not exactly. At the same time that this was going on Mr. Fehon was in England, and he wrote to me and said that German beet sugar was being sold in London at a very low price. It being my intention that England should be the market for the sugar we grew here, and hearing the exceedingly low price of sugar in London, I gave it be at.
1839. *By the Chairman*: Then £5,000 was spent in cultivating 250 acres? Yes.
1840. How was such a large amount of money spent on such a small area? It cost £8 an acre for felling the scrub, and £6 for burning it off;—it cost £9 an acre, and £16 for the forest land.
1841. Were you able to plough the land? After grubbing it, yes.
1842. Did you take a crop off it? No; it was eaten down with cattle.
1843. Do you think that the present price of sugar would justify you in returning to sugar. Yes, with reliable labour—the labour we had in the south. At £20 a ton I could grow it here.
1844. *By Mr. Cowley*: What labour do you refer to? To kanaka labour.
1845. *By Mr. King*: Do you think you could do it with European labour? No; we could not get them to grow it.
1846. If you could get them, could you grow it? No; it is not possible.
1847. Have you employed any European labour on this land? Yes.
1848. In field work? Yes.
1849. What was the result of your experience with that labour? I went into town to engage men to do about two miles of fencing. I did so, and took them into a solicitor's office to get an agreement drawn up and signed, and I offered them 15s. a chain for a two-railed fence. They said it was not sufficient. I asked them how much they wanted, and they said 17s. a chain. I agreed to this, and the agreement was drawn up and signed by both the men. They came out and commenced work—I supplied them with tools—and worked for eight days. They ran out 450 posts and rails, and came to me and said that they could not continue at the work any longer. I asked them what was the reason, and said that if they were not satisfied with the wages they could have their own terms within reason. But I could not persuade them. They said they had heard of a discovery of gold, and were going to have a look at it. They left the following morning early, and I had to get Chinamen to finish the work. That is only a sample of all the work I have had done by Europeans about the place. I have had a great many agreements with white men at their own terms, and I never had one finish a job yet.
1850. Have you grown any other tropical fruits here? Yes; coffee, oranges, limes, lemons, and bananas.
1851. Do all those things grow well? Yes; the climate seems to suit them.
1852. What is necessary in your opinion—what is required to make the growth of tropical plants a success in this district? Reliable labour; not cheap, but reliable labour.
1853. What wages could you afford to give to men who could do a good day's work and upon whom you could depend? £1 a week and his rations, although the wages have been £2 a week and rations here. They are more plentiful now than they were. I could get them from Townsville for £1. I have a married couple now, but they do not do very well. The new chums will work very well for a time until they get nixed up with the old hands, then they get as bad as the others.
1854. Do they complain about the climate? No; but in hot weather they will not turn out to work. I had a new chum at this fence, but he gave it best. He said it was too hot.
1855. How

- J. Jamieson. 1855. How many tons of cane did you get to the acre? I had a fine crop of cane compared with those which grow on the Mary River, or even Bundaberg. I never saw better cane in the Woongarra scrub.
- 16 Jan., 1889. We had 50 or 60 tons to the acre.
1856. What kind of seasons have you had lately? Very dry.
1857. Have the seasons been against the agriculturist? Yes; ever since I came here. For four or five years we have had a drought every year.
1858. Have you grown any maize? Yes.
1859. What kind of crop did you get off it? It did not do at all; it got the blight.
1860. *By the Chairman*: Was it on scrub land you had your sugar plantation? Yes.
1861. Is the forest land on this plantation suitable for sugar? Only part of it, across at the bottom of the range.
1862. Where have you had previous experience in sugar planting? I was twenty years in Maryborough. I was manager of the Mary River Sugar Company. I planted the first acre of cane north of Brisbane.
1863. What labour did you employ? The first labour I employed was the most satisfactory labour I have ever employed.
1864. What was it? Germans.
1865. What wages did you pay? £40 a year and their rations.
1866. *By Mr. Cowley*: From your experience up here, what labour do you think would best suit your requirements? Nothing but coloured labour can stand this climate.
1867. *By the Chairman*: Is the climate of Maryborough better adapted for Europeans than this country? Yes; there is no comparison at all.
1868. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are you well acquainted with this district? Yes; I have been all over it.
1869. Do you know under what conditions the agriculture of this district is carried on? Yes.
1870. Is it by whites? No.
1871. What? Chinamen.
1872. Do you know whether Chinamen lease land from the Government? Yes.
1873. To any great extent? Yes; they lease land all over the district from the Government direct.
1874. Do you know what price per acre they pay? £1 per acre; that is the standard price.
1875. What is the size of the blocks leased to them? Generally five acres.
1876. For how long? Five years.
1877. *By the Chairman*: Has this leasing of land to Chinamen been going on ever since you were in the district? Yes.
1878. Is it a common practice for the white people in this district to lease their land to Chinamen for the cultivation of produce? Yes; all improvements have been made by Chinamen.
1879. What was the object? To make the necessary improvements so as to obtain certificate of fulfilment.
1880. *By Mr. Cowley*: And also be a source of revenue? Yes; afterwards. They get a very small rent at first.
1881. *By Mr. King*: Are there many selections in your neighbourhood that are now abandoned? No; not many in this district.
1882. *By the Chairman*: Is all the land between here and the Barron River in occupation? No; between my fence and the Barron River it is not taken up; it is all mangroves.
1883. Is all the available land selected? Yes; and is in occupation, and most of it by Chinamen.
1884. Is it your opinion that but for the Chinese in this district there would have been very little agriculture at all? There would not have been an acre under cultivation.
1885. Then in your opinion the Chinese are very useful colonists in this district? Undoubtedly.
1886. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you been to the South Sea Islands? Yes; three times.
1887. Do you think that there is much available labour there? Yes; any amount.
1888. Do you think that the present system of introducing South Sea Islanders is a good one? Yes; if they were kept up to the mark nothing could be better. Still it could be improved upon. If the Government took it in hand themselves the same as with the Germans, the same as they do in Fiji, it would be a great improvement. When you want labour you make an application to the Government for it, and the Government imports the labour.
1889. If that system was adopted would it put a stop to all abuses? Yes; it would go a long way towards it.
1890. Are you of opinion that labour could be obtained at a much lower rate than at the present time? Yes.
1891. *By the Chairman*: In what year did you visit the islands? It is eight years ago—just a year before I came up here.
1892. You have not visited them recently? No.
1893. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you think that if the Government introduced these islanders at a low rate, employers could then afford to pay more per annum to the labourer? Undoubtedly.
1894. Would that be a means of attracting them to the country? Yes.
1895. I presume from your experience in sugar you have had experience of these South Sea Islanders? Yes. In Maryborough I had 800 pass through my hands in three years.
1896. Had you any trouble with them? No; they were tractable, obedient, and suitable in every respect.
1897. *By the Chairman*: This Commission has been appointed by the Government to find out if possible any suggestions that can be made by those interested in the district whereby their industries can be improved. Have you any suggestion to offer by which the sugar industry and tropical agriculture can be improved in this district, other than in the direction of labour? No. It can be improved, and labour is the only thing that can improve it.
1898. *By Mr. Cowley*: Would a reciprocal treaty with Victoria and New South Wales be of any advantage if you could get sugar and fruit into these colonies free of duty? Undoubtedly.
1899. *By the Chairman*: Have you exported any fruit yourself to the adjoining colonies? No.
1900. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you think that with South Sea Island labour even at a higher price than you pay now, introduced at a lower rate of passage money, and with a reciprocity treaty with the other colonies, you could grow sugar here to pay? Yes, I believe I could.
1901. Were those advantages given would you be prepared to start a plantation here? Yes.

1902. Would

1902. Would it be a large one? Yes.

1903. *By Mr. King*: Have you a large area of land suitable for sugar? Two thousand acres out of five thousand.

1904. *By Mr. Cowley*: And that is the only thing that keeps you from going into it? Yes, the only thing. This land was formed into a syndicate in Melbourne with a capital of 100,000 shares. Mr. Robb was one of the largest shareholders. The machinery was ordered and estimated at £30,000, but it was exported to Fiji instead of being wanted here.

1905. *By Mr. King*: In the meantime the company have given up the idea? Yes, they would have continued but I would not go on with it.

1906. *By the Chairman*: Then do you consider cocoanut planting so far a success? Yes.

1907. Do you intend to extend your plantation of cocoanuts? Yes.

J. Jamieson.

16 Jan., 1889.

WEDNESDAY, 16 JANUARY, 1889.

CAIRNS DISTRICT.

(At Cairns.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

| H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

ROBERT TAYLOR HARTLEY examined:

1908. *By the Chairman*: What are you, Mr. Hartley? I am Sub-collector of Customs, Acting Land Commissioner, and Acting Land Agent for the district of Cairns. R. T. Hartley.

1909. Do you keep a statistical record in the office of the export of fruits from this district? Yes.

1910. Are you able to give us the export of bananas for 1883? I can't give you them. I have not got the return prepared. I can only give you the total value of the fruit that was exported. This is the return that I have made up. [*Handed to Chairman*] That is to the end of December last, both what was exported coastwise and beyond the colony. 16 Jan., 1889.

1911. *By Mr. Cowley*: You know nothing about what goes to Herberton? No.

1912. *By the Chairman*: You have prepared a return showing the exports of agricultural products from this port for the last four years, will you kindly state these? Yes; they are as follow:—

Sugar: 1885, 1,184 tons 18 cwt., valued at £39,459; 1886, 1,575 tons 4 cwt., £35,351; 1887, 1,311 tons 8 cwt., £29,677; 1888, 1,533 tons, £33,631.

Molasses: 1885, valued at £2,685; 1886, £1,005; 1887, £117; 1888, £348.

Green Fruit: 1885, valued at £2,096; 1886, £5,479; 1887, £9,013; 1888, £11,617.

Maize: 1885, valued at £3,150; 1886, £2,824; 1887, £2,297; 1888, £2,192.

Tobacco (manufactured): 1885, valued at £83; 1886, £50; 1887, £133; 1888, nil.

Green Ginger: 1885, nil; 1886, nil; 1887, £34; 1888, £13.

Rice: 1885, nil; 1886, £40; 1887, £15; 1888, nil.

1913. Has any complaint reached you in an official capacity with regard to the loss by exporters of fruit going to the adjoining colony? No, not officially.

1914. *By Mr. King*: Such complaints would not be made to you officially? No, they would not; but I have heard privately.

1915. *By Mr. Cowley*: Has local consumption increased considerably during the past few years? I can only form an opinion on the increase of population, and based on that the increase would be very considerable.

1916. Both here and at Herberton? I could not say anything about Herberton.

1917. *By Mr. King*: Can you tell us what is the Chinese population in this district? I could only form an opinion.

1918. Can you do so? I should think between 1,200 and 1,500—say, 1,200. I have put them rather over the mark as there are not so many of them employed on plantations as there were. It is difficult to form an opinion when you are not intimately acquainted with the subject. I have never in my official capacity had anything to do with the population. The police make out those returns.

1919. Do you know what is the average heat in Cairns as registered by the thermometer? No, I do not keep one in the Customs.

1920. Does anyone in Cairns do so? The Post and Telegraph master, I think. He has a rain gauge, but I do not know what instruments he keeps on the station.

1921. *By the Chairman*: Have long have you been acting land commissioner in this district? Eight and a-half years.

1922. Are you able to state the number of selections taken up in the district as conditional purchases? No.

1923. And as homesteads? No; not from memory.

1924. There is a certain area on the bank of the Barron River that has been leased by the Government to Chinamen? Yes.

1925. Has that come under your cognisance? Yes.

1926. How many Chinamen have obtained leases on the Barron River from the Government? Three, I think.

1927. Only three? That is on the Lower Barron. There are two at Pine Crossing; and at the township of Bibboobra there are five.

1928. *By*

- R.T. Hartley. 1928. *By Mr. Cowley*: Could you give us the number of Chinese in the whole land district, who have leased land from the Government? Not from memory; I have it all in the books in the land office.
- 16 Jan., 1889. 1929. *By the Chairman*: Are there many who have leased land from the Government? About twenty.
1930. How long has this been going on? For six years.
1931. *By Mr. King*: What is the rent charged for this land? £1 per acre per annum.
1932. Have any special leases been granted to white men for any special purpose? For other than agricultural there have.
1933. What rent is charged for them? It varies according to the position. There are a good many leases granted within the town boundary for wharves, and they run from £200 to £85 a year.
1934. Outside the town boundary what is the rate? Generally about £1 per acre.
1935. Have the government not charged about £5? May be, in special cases.
1936. What do you mean by special cases? Where land has been taken from its position, and where it can be valued by land sold by auction in the immediate vicinity. Land adjoining that sold by auction is valued at the same price and rent charged at the rate of interest on that value.
1937. *By Mr. Cowley*: Can you give us a return, showing the whole of those special leases, with the area, the price paid, and the term of lease? Yes.
1938. Will you prepare such a return for us? Yes. [*See Appendix A.*]
1939. *By the Chairman*: In those leases granted to Chinamen do you grant them on application, or have they to be submitted for approval to the Minister? It has been done in this way, with the exception of two or three leases of twenty-five acres each: The Chinamen have seen a suitable piece of land, and they have gone on to it, and knocked down the scrub, and the first thing we heard of it was that corn was growing on it. That is the first way land was leased to them. They were in possession, and it was difficult to get them out. I represented the matter to the Government, and suggested that they should pay some rent for the use of the land. The Chinamen have leased the land on an improving lease, the lease to terminate at six months' notice.
1940. Had those men taken possession of Government reserves or forfeited selections? Government reserves or vacant Crown lands. They were in occupation when I came to the district. They had just "squatted" on the ground.
1941. Can you of your own knowledge say that there is a large number of Chinamen engaged in agricultural pursuits in this district? Yes.
1942. Do you know if any of them are carrying out the improvements of selections in order to fulfil the conditions? I can't say that of my own personal knowledge. I have heard men saying that such is the case.
1943. But in those cases a white man would be residing on the land as bailiff? Yes.
1944. Do you, as Land Commissioner, know most of the selections in the district? Well, I know a good many of them. My other duties keep me in town; it is not as if I had only the land work to attend to, or I should have made myself more acquainted with the district than I have. I have a ranger to perform those duties.
1945. Can you tell us from your own knowledge whether the bulk of agriculture is carried on by white people or Chinese? By Chinese.
1946. Do you know of any white men farming by their own efforts or by employing labour? No; only Mr. Walker, on the Mulgrave River, and Mr. Robson. I am not sure whether the latter has any Chinese employed or not; I do not think he has. There is no permission to sub-lease.
1947. Am I to understand that no homestead selector who has not obtained his certificate can sub-lease to Chinamen without its coming through your office? I am speaking of selections under the Act of 1884, which provides for a sub-lease by permission, and only on those terms. The consent of the Minister of Lands has to be obtained.
1948. Is this Mr. Robson under the Act of 1884? Yes.
1949. *By Mr. King*: Have you had many applications passed through your office for permission to sub-lease? No, none.
1950. Are you aware of any land taken up under the 1884 Act that has been sub-leased? None that I can prove.
1951. Have you reason to believe it? I have heard that Chinamen are renting land, and have made inquiries and have been told that they are in the employment of the selector. It is impossible to prove that unless you could manage to get hold of a copy of the agreement under which they held the land. I should say that people are letting some of their selections; still, if I were asked to prove it I could not.
1952. Have you prepared a return as requested? As requested, I have prepared a return. [*See Appendices.*]

ISAAC DUFFIN examined:

- I. Duffin. 1953. *By the Chairman*: What are you? I am Crown Lands Ranger for the district of Port Douglas and for the district of Cairns.
- 16 Jan., 1889. 1954. Will you kindly state the area of land selected under the Land Act of 1876, showing the selections which have been taken up, those forfeited, and those still held by the selector, and the gross area of land now held by them as homesteads in the district of Port Douglas? Yes. There are 78 conditional purchases still held, having an area of 29,126 acres; 24 selections taken up as conditional purchases and forfeited, having an area of 15,594 acres; 52 homesteads still held by selectors, having an area of 7,000; 15 forfeited homesteads, which have a total area of 2,220 acres; total (approximate) area taken up and held under the Land Act of 1884, 3,054 acres; present area (approximate) thrown open for village settlement, 300 acres; total area of cleared scrub land, about 5,000 acres throughout the district; total area under cultivation, about 3,000, including land devoted to the growth of fruit trees.
1955. Are you acquainted with the Daintree River? Yes.
1956. Do you know how many miles up the river the land has been selected? About twenty-three miles.
1957. How many selectors are now residing on their selections on the river? Five.
1958. *By Mr. King*: Have any of those selections had Chinese on them? One.
1959. *By the Chairman*: What are those selectors doing? Growing bananas.

1960. Not

I. Duffin.

16 Jan., 1899.

1960. Not cultivating anything else? No; except a little corn and sweet potatoes.
1961. Is there not a fruit-preserving establishment on one of them? There are two.
1962. And how many men are employed at the industry? Only the selectors themselves.
1963. Any other labour? Two kanakas.
1964. Do any of the selectors in the Port Douglas district lease their land to Chinamen? I do not know of the existence of these leases, but I believe that there is an agreement between Alcock and the Chinamen. These are the only Chinamen on the Daintree.
1965. In the district generally, who lease their land to Chinese? Jones on the Mossman; Pringle, McCrae, and Montgomerie on the Mowbray.
1966. *By Mr. Cowley*: Who is the man adjoining Mr. Jones? Watson; but his Chinamen have all cleared out.
- 1966a. There is a man there with a Chinaman adjoining Jones's selection on the other side of the river from Jones? Not that I know of; he may have come there since I was in the district.
1967. *By the Chairman*: In riding through the district of Port Douglas have you frequently come across Chinamen working at agricultural work? Always.
1968. What we want to know is: Are those Chinamen cultivating land they have selected themselves, or are they cultivating land leased to them by selectors? I do not know any Europeans in this district who are cultivating themselves—all the cultivation, except at Bribri Plantation, is by Chinamen.
1969. *By Mr. King*: With regard to those selections on the Daintree which are not occupied, is the land forfeited? A lot of it is Crown land that was surveyed by Mr. Cook and thrown open for selection, but it is too far up the river. These selections are at present standing for forfeiture.
1970. Is any of the land freehold up the Daintree? Nearly all the river frontage is freehold.
1971. When the land became freehold what became of it? It was abandoned; the bailiffs were taken off.
1972. Then what became of the improved land on these abandoned selections? It became disimproved as fast as it could.
1973. It is returning back to the natural scrub? Yes.
1974. *By the Chairman*: What is the character of the unselected land between the Mossman and Daintree Rivers;—is it land fit for selection? The land up Saltwater Creek and on the Mossman is all taken up; it is the land between Saltwater Creek and the Daintree that at the present time is open for selection.
1975. What is the character of that land? It is very low-lying and rough, and no one will take it as it is unfit for selection. There are no facilities to get on to the land.
1976. *By Mr. King*: Is that for want of roads? Yes; there are no roads except on paper.
1977. On the other side of the Mossman—to the south of it—is there not a good deal of good country in amongst the ranges? Yes; on Cassowary Creek.
1978. Is that country available for selection? Yes; it is put up for selection.
1979. But is it country that a selector could make a living on? No; you could not get a dray on to it. The country is interspersed with creeks, and there are no bridges. At this time of the year a dray could go on to the land, but in the wet weather it would be impossible.
1980. *By the Chairman*: How many miles from Port Douglas? Thirty-two.
1981. Then it cannot be the case that 3,000 acres are under cultivation in the district? That is because the township is included in it.
1982. Then, really, there were a larger number of Chinamen at work in agriculture before the Russell diggings broke out than there are now? Yes; the Chinamen on the Daintree had 1,500 acres under maize.
1983. Did any of the white population leave lately to go to the diggings? Yes.
1984. Then the discovery of that goldfield has something to do with the depression of Port Douglas? Yes.
1985. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say that there is a large reserve for village settlement? How much is it? About 1,000 acres.
1986. How many of these village settlements are there? Three, with 1,000 acres each.
1987. Where are these village settlements? One on Rifle Creek, one on Cumming Creek, and there is one on Saltwater Creek between it and the Daintree.
1988. Do they consider it good land? It is very good, but too rough.
1989. Is it all scrub land? Yes; except the one on Rifle Creek where it is mixed.
1990. *By Mr. King*: Are those accessible to drays? No.
1991. Have they been thrown open for selection? I think they have been open about twelve months.
1992. Has any land been selected on them? Not that I know of.
1993. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say that there are two fruit-preserving establishments on the Daintree. Can you say about the quantity of fruit they turn out? One turns out 60 lb. of dried bananas a day and the other about 12 lb.
1994. Do they make anything else besides dried bananas? Stewart is preserving fruits and mangoes, and intends trying pineapples. It is an experiment.
1995. Do they make banana meal? They do.
1996. How much? None for market. It is for their domestic use. It eats very well.
1997. Do you know whether any land on the Daintree and Mossman has been leased by the Government to Chinese? No, sir; none.
1998. To your knowledge there are no Chinese settled on Government lands or either the Daintree or Mossman? None.
1999. Are there any Chinese agriculturists on the Daintree? One at Alcock's selection.
2000. How many acres of land have they under cultivation? Sixty-eight acres last year.
2001. What was the crop they grew principally? Twenty-five tons of rice, and the balance of the land was in maize.
2002. Are those all that are left out of the 1,500 acres that were previously cultivated by Chinamen? That is all.
2003. *By the Chairman*: Now, with regard to the land district of Cairns, kindly inform the Commission of the area of land selected, forfeited, cultivated, and now occupied in the Cairns district? Yes; as follows:—127 occupied conditional purchase selections with an aggregate area of 62,237 acres; 27 forfeited

I. Duffin.
16 Jan., 1889.

forfeited conditional purchase selections with an aggregate area of 19,624 acres; 62 occupied homesteads with an area of 7,706 acres; 13 forfeited homesteads with an area of 692 acres; 114 occupied agricultural farms taken up under the Land Act of 1884 with a total area of 18,087 acres; 8 forfeited agricultural farms taken up under the Land Act of 1884 with a total area of 1,145 acres; approximate area of cleared land held under the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876, 6,000 acres; approximate area of cultivated land held under the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876, including that used for fruit-growing, and exclusive of land used for cultivation of sugar cane, 4,000 acres; approximate area of cleared land held under the Crown Land Alienation Act, 1884-5, 1,000 acres; approximate area of cultivated land held under the Crown Land Alienation Act, 1884-5, 300 acres.

2004. *By Mr. King*: Is there any land leased under special lease to Chinamen in the Cairns district? Yes; it is not included in this.

2005. What is the area? It is small in this district. I should think that about forty acres would cover the lot.

2006. *By Mr. Groom*: Of course you ride all over this district in the performance of your duties? Yes.
2007. Have you ridden over the country situated between Cairns and the sugar plantation at the Pyramid? Yes.

2008. By whom is the land cultivated? Chinamen.

2009. How did they get it? They must have arranged with the selectors.

2010. Have any Chinamen taken up land as a selection in this district? Yes; two on Freshwater Creek, and two on top of the range. These are of course naturalised Chinamen.

2011. In other parts of the district is the cultivation chiefly carried on by Chinamen also? In this district and in Port Douglas I do not know of anyone carrying on cultivation except Chinamen.

2012. Why is it that only Chinese cultivate the land? I imagine that they have an agreement with the selectors.

2013. But why do the selectors themselves not cultivate the land?—Why do those who take it up not do so? I can hardly see how to answer that question.

2014. I will put it in another form: If a homestead selector has a farm under "*The Land Act of 1884*," do you know of any of them who are employing Chinamen to fulfil their conditions? All those who can get them.

2015. They themselves at the same time living on the farm? Yes; but employing Chinese to fell scrub and do everything else except erect the house.

2016. Why is it that Europeans do not do the work themselves? Because the Chinese pay them a fair rent per acre for the land.

2017. *By Mr. King*: But if it pays the Chinaman to cultivate the land, why would it not pay the European to cultivate it himself? The Chinamen seem to understand better how to cultivate with the hoe. The Europeans who settle here are not farmers. I know of only one practical farmer in the Cairns district, and that is a gentleman down on the Mulgrave, Walter by name.

2018. *By the Chairman*: Is the bulk of the 4,000 acres under fruit worked by Chinamen? The whole of it.

2019. They grow fruit, cultivate the land, and produce all the crops? Yes.

2020. Then, practically, if there were no Chinese in this district there would be no land under cultivation? I do not think there would be an acre.

2021. *By Mr. King*: I understood you to say that Europeans would not cultivate with the hoe. Do you think that when the stumps are taken out and the land cleared that they would work their land with the plough? I think so; and they would make it pay.

2022. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you only think they would make it pay, or do you know it for a positive fact? I am only speaking from what Mr. Walker told me.

2023. Then Mr. Walker is the only man from whom you obtained this information? Yes; with regard to making it pay.

2024. *By Mr. King*: With regard to the selections in this district, when selections become freehold does the same practice prevail here as on the Daintree of taking off the bailiff? The water frontages to the Barron River are mostly freehold. The white people have mostly left them, but the Chinese are paying £1 per acre annual rental.

2025. Take the frontages to the Mulgrave and Russell Rivers, is there any freehold land there? There is; and the land which is freehold is uncultivated at the present time.

2026. Then the same state of things prevails as on the Daintree—the land is going back into scrub? Yes; and now where there are fruit trees at present, I will soon not be able to find some of them.

2027. Have you heard of fruit trees being transplanted from one selection to another to fulfil the conditions on two or more selections? I found that they had not been removed, and that the statement was not correct. I ascertained that in last November only.

2028. *By the Chairman*: Then if a witness has informed the Commission that such was the case, from your own knowledge he would not be stating the truth? He would not.

2029. *By Mr. Cowley*: Might it not be done without your knowledge? It might; but I don't think so. They were only small selections, and I visited both of them and saw trees growing on both.

2030. *By Mr. King*: What is the average area of those selections that are abandoned—are they large or small? From 1,000 acres to 1,280 acres.

2030a. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are there no small ones? One on Binda Creek.

2031. On the Russell and Mulgrave, are none of the selections from 160 acres upwards abandoned? Yes; one small homestead on Binda Creek, and one on the opposite side of the creek, of about 320 acres; but there was only about eighty acres of good land in the whole lot. I am speaking of the frontage to the Russell River.

2032. *By Mr. King*: Does the existence of those large areas of unoccupied land in any part of the district increase the difficulties of settlers to take land up? I do not know; there is plenty of land up the river as good as this.

2033. *By the Chairman*: Is it easy of access? The land that is freehold is just as easy of access as the other.

2034. *By Mr. King*: Does the existence of large areas of unoccupied land increase the difficulties of men to go in and select land? Yes; and it leaves the selectors more scattered.

2035. *By*

2035. *By Mr. Cowley*: What was the cause of the desertion of these selectors? Want of roads.
2036. *By Mr. King*: But want of roads where they had a frontage to navigable water would not cause them to desert their selections? The Russell River is only navigable for a short distance except by flat-bottomed boats.
2037. *By Mr. Cowley*: How many selectors are now residing on the Russell River? There are seven homestead selectors residing there now.
2038. Any conditional purchase selectors? Two—that is, two selectors are residing on their land, the remainder are represented by bailiffs.
2039. How many by bailiffs? Eight.
2040. Are those men all cultivating land? No; only two.
2041. What extent of cultivation? Merely a few fruit trees. They are merely occupying the land.
2042. Do they employ any coloured labour of any description, or do they do the work by themselves? If you include aboriginals, they engage a great many aboriginals.
2043. Do you think that these men intend to make permanent homes, or will they ultimately abandon their selection? Unless they get better facilities for getting their produce to market they cannot do anything else but abandon it.
2044. *By the Chairman*: In the course of your travels do you find many creeks and rivers unbridged? The whole of them out that way.
2045. Have you ever represented that to the Department in drawing up your reports? I have often mentioned it to the land agent here, but not to the Department in Brisbane.
2046. You understand that this Commission is appointed with the view of ascertaining any measures that might be taken for the improvement of tropical agriculture in any district.—Do you know of any way by which tropical agriculture could be assisted, not in the way of handing the land over to Chinamen, but in such a way as would induce Europeans to cultivate both cereals and fruit? On the Russell River better communication is wanted; that would involve putting a railway from here to Geraldton.
2047. *By Mr. Cowley*: Then it is the want of communication? Yes; I knew a selector in the Russell River district who had over two tons of corn which he offered to sell at 2s. a bushel when corn was realising 8s. a bushel in Cairns, and he could not get anybody to go into his selection and bring it out. It is called the Russell River district, but it is on the Mulgrave. He is about ten miles further in the scrub from Mr. Walker's place. This selection is on the Mulgrave River.
2048. *By the Chairman*: How many miles from Cairns? About thirty.
2049. How far is his farm from the Russell River? It is fronting the Mulgrave River.
2050. Does not the steamer "Burdekin" go there? Yes; to a creek six miles from the selection.
2051. What was to prevent him taking his corn to that place? Want of horses; the road would do if he had had horses.
2052. He is only six miles from the wharf where the "Burdekin" goes to and the road is a good one? Yes; it is practicable for cartage at this time of year.
2053. *By Mr. King*: Was the steamer "Burdekin" trading to that port at the time? Yes; it called once a month.
2054. *By Mr. Cowley*: Then if he had had a pair of horses he could have carted his corn to the steamer? Yes; if he had had horses he could have packed it down.
2055. If he had had two horses and a dray could he have carted it? Well, I think it is only suitable for packing. A selector told me, in regard to some corn he sent down to Townsville, that he only realised 1s. a bushel on it in Townsville.
2056. *By Mr. King*: Does the steamer "Burdekin" call at the river when coming to Cairns? No; only when going south.
2057. So if he had sent the corn to Cairns by the "Burdekin" he would have had to send it to Townsville first and then back to Cairns? Yes.
2058. *By Mr. Cowley*: Would not the "Burdekin" go into the Russell River on her way up if she were certain of getting two or three tons of cargo for this port? She might.
2059. Do you know for a fact that they will go into any of those ports, if promised a cargo for either Cairns or Townsville? I do not know anything about it.

ARCHIBALD MESTON examined:

2060. *By the Chairman*: How long have you resided in this district? Seven years.
2061. You have a selection on the Barron River? Yes; and the Russell River.
2062. *By Mr. King*: You have lived on the Clarence River? Yes.
2063. *By the Chairman*: Have you any suggestions to offer by which the fruit industry and tropical agriculture can be encouraged? In regard to sugar, I may say that I arrived here in the end of 1881, representing myself and three capitalists who were desirous of becoming possessed of land on which they could form a sugar plantation. We decided to go in for an expensive mill, and had an offer from Messrs. Mirlees, Tait, and Watson of a mill which they had just completed, to be erected at Freshwater Creek for £25,000. We ordered it, and just after ordering the mill, and before the conclusion of the bargain, there came a change of Government, and the general dread amongst the sugar planters of the colony was that kanaka labour was about to be abolished suddenly or otherwise, with or without warning. As to the probability of a prospect of black labour being abolished I wrote to my partners, one in Sydney and one in London, warning them what danger we might be incurring in view of the uncertainty with regard to the labour question, and recommending them strongly to countermand the order for the mill, and to withhold operations until the labour question was finally settled one way or other. I pointed out to them that it would be utterly impossible to go into the production of sugar with white labour. They accepted my advice, and the order for the mill was countermanded, and we abandoned our original intention of going into sugar-growing. We still retained possession of the land, with no very definite idea of what we should do with it, and quite satisfied that if there were any possibility of obtaining a supply of labour—reliable black labour at a low price—we would be prepared to proceed into extensive cultivation, chiefly experimental, so as to test the land for coffee, cocoa, &c., and ascertain if they could be grown profitably for market. So far there has been no settlement of the labour question, and no prospect of obtaining labour at such wages

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A. Meston.

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A. Meston. as we could afford to pay. We went in for experiments, and my partners expended about £11,000 in the district, for which they got no return whatever. We have failed so far to discover anything which we could grow at a profit, or with a certainty of profit, with the labour we would be compelled to employ. If cheap labour were available it would be employed in an extensive series of experiments, experiments which would inevitably result in the solution of the problem of what can be grown here at a profit. Until the labour is furnished no experiments will be made, except by those who have a surplus capital which they can afford to spend on experiments.

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2064. What was the £11,000 spent on? On improvements.

2065. What did those consist of? Extensive clearing and the planting of an orchard, which is now in very good order.

2066. In whose occupation is it? It is in the occupation of Messrs. John Brinsmead and Son. Torazzi has been in charge of it, and Chinamen have been working it. I think that there are altogether 3,000 trees in the orchard, most of them five years old.

2067. By Mr. Couley: But you have had some return from those for the £11,000? No return, so far. From one selection we have had a little return from timber.

2068. By the Chairman: How many acres does Brinsmead's selection consist of? I took up 1,000 acres, and, on its being surveyed, there were only 780 acres available.

2069. And is that the whole of the land held by the three capitalists you mentioned? No; 1,000 acres on the other side of the Freshwater Creek. We took up 2,000 acres there altogether. The homestead I occupy is part of the original property. We have dissolved partnership. I was left with the homestead, and the others took up the rest of the property themselves.

2070. Have you any suggestions to offer by which the fruit-growing industry of this district or tropical agriculture generally can be improved? One thing with regard to fruit-growing I would like to suggest—I am perfectly satisfied from my experience of fruit-growing here, and we have large orchards in the district—that grafted trees are a mistake. So far these have unmistakably proved to be a mistake, and seedling trees are best adapted for this particular district, and probably for every other. I think that most of our grafted trees were got from the south. The orange trees are grafted on lemon stocks, and they have not nearly the vitality of the seedling trees, or anything approaching it. The most fruit-producing trees in this district are seedling trees. With regard to the profit, or the promised profit, on fruit trees in this district, so far only bananas have been profitable. We are a long distance from the southern markets, necessitating transport of a sea trip for a period extending over five or six days. So far bananas have been the only fruit we can grow successfully that will bear transport. In regard to mangoes, I know of twelve cases of mangoes sent to Sydney by the "Cintra" in perfect order, and the returns did not even nearly cover the expense of sending them down. With the exception of bananas, and possibly with one or two other fruits which will bear the journey by sea, fruit-growing cannot be made a profitable industry here, unless it is in connection with a fruit-preserving and jam-making establishment, where perishable fruits can be immediately utilised.

2071. By Mr. Couley: So far as you know, then, there is no hope of carrying on any agricultural work to any great extent unless you have cheap and reliable labour.—What would be the most suitable labour for this district? After a very long and careful consideration of the subject, it appears that kanakas are the least objectionable and the most reliable. That class of labour can be brought here to do certain work, confined to that work, and then sent away again.

2072. Of all the different kinds of labour introduced what do you consider the most suitable? So far we have had no experience of any labour except Chinese and kanakas.

2073. Javanese? There are none here.

2074. But there are; I have seen them? Very few.

2075. We saw Javanese at the Pyramid and Hambleton? I could not speak of them. But of the Chinese and kanaka, I say unhesitatingly "keep the kanaka."

2076. Do you think you could carry on agricultural pursuits successfully with Germans, Danes, or any other European labour? I think not. No agricultural pursuits could afford to pay the wages for European labour. Any European labour, no matter under what conditions they came out here, will require the same wages as other Europeans after a very short time. No European would work at wages lower than a man in the same position beside him was getting. It is the worst labour that you can have. If the kanaka labour were obtainable by all classes of agriculturists on the same conditions as sugar planters agriculture would be pretty extensively adopted, and there would be extensive operations.

2077. Do you not know that it is a fact that farmers can obtain kanakas on the same terms as sugar planters do now? No.

2078. Such is the case;—the Act was not made for sugar planters only? Then supposing that a man who tries agriculture on a small scale wants ten kanakas it costs him nearly £300 to bring them here, to begin with, and that is too much.

2079. By the Chairman: Beyond the labour question, have you any suggestion to offer as to the improvement of tropical agriculture? I do not see how you can promote agriculture without labour. If agriculture has suitable soil and climate and reliable labour, then there is no difficulty in promoting it. There are plenty of men waiting long and waiting patiently to do something with it.

2080. By Mr. Couley: Would not a reciprocity treaty with the other colonies be of assistance? In what respect?

2081. By making a treaty whereby our agricultural products would be admitted into the other colonies free, and thus creating a demand for it? No; that would not be a solution of the case. You will have to find out what you can send to the southern colonies at a profit.

2082. You can send sugar and bananas? That is not a solution of the difficulty.

2083. By the Chairman: Would the establishment of an experimental farm in the Cairns district, so that all practical information could be gathered from it, be of use? Not an experimental farm, but if the Government would introduce plants into a tropical nursery and have them propagated here and distributed amongst the selectors for nothing it would be a very great benefit.

2084. By Mr. Couley: That would be an experimental farm? No; let every farmer be an experimental farmer.

2085. *By the Chairman*: But if he has not the necessary knowledge? He would soon have it. I would advise the appointment by the Government of an experienced agriculturist, who would go round to those people who took those plants from the nursery. He would have to be skilled in the knowledge of those tropical products. A. Meston.
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2086. The evidence is that the bulk of the selectors hand their land over to the Chinamen to grow whatever they like, irrespective of condition or climate or anything else, and I take that to be a proof that those men who hold the land do not know themselves how to proceed with agriculture? Exactly. They do not know what to plant, or how to proceed. I believe in an agricultural lecturer to go round and instruct the people in the propagation of tropical plants, and to distribute plants from a tropical nursery. There is one reason why there is so little agriculture in this district, and why selections are in the hands of the Chinese, and it is this: After a selector takes up a scrub farm it requires at least six years' hard labour before he can introduce any agricultural instrument except the hoe, and there is nothing known of anything that can be grown profitably by a European with the hoe. At the end of the six years the most of the stumps are rotten and the plough and harrow can be introduced, and one man with a plough and a pair of horses can do more than thirty men with hoes. So far there are not 100 acres in the Cairns district into which the plough can be introduced.

ANDREW LEON examined:

2087. *By the Chairman*: You are a native of China? I am.

2088. Are you a naturalised British subject? I am.

2089. How long have you been in the district? Since 1875.

2090. Have you taken up any selection? I was the first—the pioneer—to do so.

2091. Whereabouts is your selection? Three miles from Cairns.

2092. Is it what is known as Hop Wah's plantation? Yes.

2093. How many acres did you cultivate? We cultivated between 300 and 400 acres.

2094. Did you grow sugar cane? At first we started cotton, and then we found that was rather expensive, the labour taking all the profits. Then sugar came in, and we communicated with a friend in Honolulu, who advised us to try sugar. Then we started sugar. At first it was very expensive, the labour especially; still we went on very well for the first season. The cane grew very well, but the crop did not turn out well at all.

2095. What labour did you employ? At first Chinese labour.

2096. And how did you pay them? Well, we paid them from £40 to £60 a year according to the class of labour.

2097. Did you give them rations? Yes, everything.

2098. Did the plantation pay? No.

2099. What did you do? We had to give it up.

2100. You sold it? Yes.

2101. Did you lose much money in the speculation? We expended about £45,000, and then we sold the land for £15,000, and the machines and everything else included for £16,000, giving a loss of £29,000.

2102. *By Mr. King*: Did you take up any more land? I took some up; I purchased a selection from another party.

2103. Where is it? In the far range above the Barron valley.

2104. What is the area? 1,280 acres.

2105. Are you cultivating any of it? I have about twenty acres cleared and under cultivation.

2106. What do you grow there? Principally fruit trees. There are 1,100 fruit trees, lemons, oranges, mangoes, and figs, also pineapples. I had about 1,500 trees, but out of that number only 1,100 are growing. That, however, is not the fault of the country or the climate; it was because they were too long on the road coming here.

2107. How many men do you employ? At present only three. Before I had several lads weeding and clearing, but now the trees are so big that it is not so much trouble, and we only employ three, and they are Chinamen.

2108. What wages do you give them? £1 a week and all found.

2109. Are you getting any returns from your fruit? No, not yet. The trees are not yet old enough.

2110. *By the Chairman*: Is there anything that the Government could do that would help the selectors who are growing fruit and other things? I believe if the Government took the matter in hand it would be a great advantage to the colony.

2111. What might they do? A lot of selectors have taken up land, and plenty of people have not got the capital to carry on, and they are blocked and keep the land idle. Plenty would be selectors have got families and they would settle down but for the blacks annoying them. Another thing would be to cut the land up into smaller portions, not into such large areas, and advance money to the selectors. You could not expect the bank to advance any money. Emigrants should get land orders for five acres, because if they settled on the land and cultivated it, it would be a good thing for the colony. From my experience from Dungeness up this coast to the Mossman and Daintree Rivers, it is the most wonderful country in the world.

2112. *By Mr. King*: What size do you think those farms should be? Well, I would give twenty acres to one man, and that should be the smallest.

2113. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are you not aware that men can select as small an area as they like? Yes; but the land should be cut up into certain small areas, and then thrown open for selection.

2114. Are you near the railway line? About four miles.

2115. Have you grown any rice in this country? I have seen it grown.

2116. Does the rice that you have seen, grow as well here as in China? I have no experience in rice growing in China; but I have heard from those who know that it grows exceedingly well here; better than in China.

2117. Do you think that the bulk of the land in this district is suitable for rice growing? It is the finest country you could wish to see.

2118. Had

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- A. Leon.
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2118. Had you any experience in agriculture in China? I had not; but I have had experience elsewhere. I have been a couple of years in Cuba and Havannah. The country there is just the same as Queensland, and so is the climate. The thermometer there is just the same, 90 degrees to 100 degrees. In my country it is always about 45 degrees or 40 degrees.
2119. Are you aware that the bulk of the agricultural work in this district is carried on by Chinamen? Yes.
2120. Do those agriculturists, your countrymen, do well? Do they make a good living? Yes; some get 25s. to 30s a week, and some might be better than that.
2121. Have they any cause for complaint? They appear, in my opinion, to be very well treated, and have no cause for complaint.
2122. *By the Chairman*: Do you think you will be able to make your present selection pay? I believe so.
2123. Do you grow bananas? I have not started any. I am rather too far from the coast, and bananas should be grown near the coast so as to save expense in transit.
2124. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you look on Herberton as your market? Yes, when the railway is completed.

JOHN PETER JOHNSTONE examined :

- J. P. Johnstone.
16 Jan., 1889
2125. *By the Chairman*: You are a selector on the Daintree River? Yes; but I am at present working at a contract on the second section of the railway.
2126. What is the area of your selection? It is a homestead selection of about 160 acres.
2127. Have you fulfilled all the conditions on it? Yes; it will be freehold as soon as I have paid for it. I have not paid for it yet, but as soon as I am in a position to do so I will.
2128. Do you wish to make any suggestions to the Commission? The reason why I wished to see the Commission was that I am interested in a new industry of my own invention, and I want to show it to you. I have brought it before the Commissioner of Lands and the Secretary for Agriculture when I was down south about five months ago.
2129. What is it? It is a new kind of arrowroot. It is used for the same purpose. It is made from a native fruit of the South Seas, something like sweet potato. They call it "kumala?" It is a kind of very large mealy sweet potato, a native of Tanna Island, in the South Seas. It grows to perfection on the coast land here and on the tableland. Its special qualities are that it contains a quantity of farinaceous food which I am certain is superior to arrowroot or cornflour, or similar products. The first quality is extract of kumala root, which is adapted for culinary purposes and takes the place of arrowroot and cornflour. Then there is kumala meal intended as food for dogs, cattle, horses, and pigs. Experience proves that 2 lbs. of kumala extract is equal to 3 lbs. of the best arrowroot. It is used for everything the same as arrowroot. The whole of the plant is of use for man or beast; even the tops when cut into coarse chaff can be used for feeding cattle and horses. That is about all the explanation I can give you.
2130. Is it easily grown? Yes; it is never a failure. Whether there is excessive rain or even a long spell of dry weather the crop never fails.
2131. Have you taken out a patent for it? No.
2132. Are the seeds available for distribution? Yes. I grow it from tubers.
2133. Are any growing in the district? I don't know of any in this district, but I have any amount on the Daintree. All sweet potatoes contain starch, but this fruit contains an enormous quantity of starch.
2134. Have you any suggestions you can offer us for improvement in this district, in the growing of fruit and agricultural products? No, I can't suggest anything. I can see a lot of mistakes and faults people make, but it is not my business to point out people's faults.
2135. Have you every facility for taking produce from your selection to market? Yes; but I am rather out of the way, and that is the reason why I am not living in the district. I have no neighbours for four miles, and it is not safe to keep a wife and family there, as the blacks are about. I would live on my selection if there was closer settlement round it. I have already—about two months ago—given a report to the Minister of Lands on my experience in fruit growing, farming and drying. I believe that they have kept that report in Brisbane. They asked me when I was down if I would give them my experience.
2136. Have you ever grown rice? I have never grown rice myself, but tobacco and maize.
2137. Did the tobacco answer? Yes, I believe it will have a great future. A few people have started it and failed in this district; but it is not the fault of the country that it failed; there are other reasons.
2138. Is anyone living on your selection? No, I sometimes go there and look after the place.
2139. The undergrowth will soon grow up again? Yes; but I can't make a living there. I do not blame the land, but it takes money to cultivate land.

WILLIAM DOYLE HOBSON examined :

- W.D. Hobson.
16 Jan., 1889
2140. *By the Chairman*: What are you, Mr. Hobson? A merchant in Cairns.
2141. You are also engaged in the shipping business? Yes, in general trade.
2142. Just tell us your experiences in tropical agriculture and the shipping of fruit, and any suggestions you have to make? With regard to fruit, the principal export is bananas, pineapples, oranges, and lemons. For small bunches, bananas realise 11d. a bunch up to 1s. 6d. for very good bunches; the average being from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 3d. In shipping south to Melbourne, every second cargo of fruit arrives in bad condition. We find that with paying the freight in advance, and the payment of the bananas to the growers, that it is hardly worth our while shipping them. Previously, we used to pay 50 per cent. of the full freight, and now we have to pay the full freight before shipping, whether the fruit arrives in good condition or not. Fully 20 per cent. of the fruit is damaged so as to be worth nothing. Taking my transactions in fruit from the time I started, my experience is that there has been a loss—not a very considerable loss, but a loss. My agents continually advise me that if the fruit was to arrive in better order they would be able to sell it at a profitable price, at from 3s. 6d. to 4s. for a bunch of bananas, which leaves a margin of profit. The freight is 1s. a bunch, out of which 3d. goes for lighterage, which we consider unnecessary.
2143. *By*

2143. *By Mr. Cowley*: That is 3d. per bunch lighterage and 9d. per bunch freight to Sydney? Yes. W.D. Hobson.
2144. How long has these transactions extended over? For two and a-half years, but more especially during the past six months. The same remarks apply to pineapples, the only difference being that they are shipped in cases. 16 Jan., 1889.
2145. Do you ship pineapples in cases? Yes. There is a demand for as many as we can send.
2146. Then the damage would not be owing to carelessness on the part of the shipper? No. If we had quicker communication it would make a difference. It takes a ship twenty-four hours to go to Townsville, and another seventy-six to go to Brisbane, and the fruit is bundled after a good deal. These are things that might be remedied.
2147. Are any complaints made of ullage in regard to cases of pineapples? I never received a return yet that did not show very serious discrepancies.
2148. Do you get any compensation for loss of pineapples in cases? No. I have often sent in claims, but have received no compensation. They are a perishable fruit, and my agents have advice to take delivery, and the steamship companies do not hold themselves responsible.
2149. *By the Chairman*: Can you give us any experience you have had in tropical agriculture, and make any suggestions you think would be for the benefit of agriculture? I have tried both tobacco and sugar. In the matter of sugar, Draper, who was my partner, and McKnight bought the Hop Wah Plantation, horses, drays, and everything in going condition. Our chief reason for buying it was that I was persuaded by some men who were out of employment that they could supply me with good field labour at the rate of 3s. 6d. a ton to cut the cane and deliver it at the mill, using my horses and drays. I employed four or five gangs of men, overseered by a man with experience on the Clarence River. Those were all white men. I was advertising my business by employing white men on a sugar plantation. In three days they all refused to work, excepting one. They offered to return the rations I had supplied them with. This left me in a hole, having signed the contract with Lee On. I offered them 6d. a ton more. This was a price we could not afford to pay, and it is more than any plantation can pay. I even offered them better terms but they said it was ridiculous, that I had treated them well in not taking their rations back, only not paying them for what they had done, and added that they could not do it at any price. They offered to do it for 4s. a ton if I allowed them to cut it eight inches from the ground. I wrote to the manager on the subject, and he replied that the proposal was ridiculous, as nearly all the sugar was in the last eight inches. I had not sufficient field labour, and we had to put the mill hands on cutting cane, without keeping the mill going. I lost £1,495, besides interest.
2150. *By Mr. King*: I understand that you bought the crop growing? Yes, ready for crushing, all the machinery, horses, drays and everything.
2151. How many acres? Between 700 and 800 acres.
2152. And you lost £1,495 on the transaction? Yes. The one man who did not refuse to continue to carry out his contract is in the district now, and you can get his evidence. His name is Ned Barnard. He attempted to carry out his contract and got men to help him. They were to get £4 10s. an acre, and 10s. was to be allowed extra when the manager was satisfied that the cane was extra heavy. Some of the cane was very heavy, and they got £5 an acre for it. He allowed us out of that 35s. a week for the use of two drays and four horses.
2153. Have you ever had any other experience in tropical agriculture? Yes, in tobacco growing. My brother had taken up a homestead selection on the Russell River. He cleared about twelve acres of land, and sowed tobacco on it, which I recommended him to do. I found that it involved more labour than we anticipated, and which we could not obtain. Our first crop we tried to work without sufficient labour, and it was destroyed by grubs. We got little or nothing for it. We tried it again, and had the misfortune to have a very rainy season, which destroyed it. We tried it again, and being convinced from experience that labour was necessary, I managed to get one white new chum whose wages were £1 a week and tucker. I also got a time-expired kanaka, whose wages were £1 a week and tucker. We succeeded that year in getting about a third of a ton to the acre of good quality tobacco leaf, which I sold at 10d. per lb. We made another attempt and added more labour, I think three kanakas this time. The crop was destroyed by the river being too high for the dray. The drayman miscalculated the height of the river, and the tobacco got damaged in crossing. The last trial I made I got the best price for the tobacco, and sold it at 11d. per lb. I calculated up, and found that the loss in tobacco was £700, and that added to the loss on sugar prevented me from going on, and I gave it best.
2154. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did you say that white men refused to cut and load cane at 4s. a ton? They refused at any price. They said they would not take it at any price.
2155. About what was the weight of cane per acre? It averaged about twenty tons, one patch gave fifty tons.
2156. What price per ton did you pay for this cane when buying it from Hop Wah and Co.? We paid for the right of cutting the cane and the use of their horses and drays £400.
2157. And yet at that price you lost £1,500? Yes, and interest accumulating.
2158. How much sugar did you make? I could not tell you.
2159. Did you crush all the cane? No.
2160. What eventually became of the cane? It was wasted.
2161. *By the Chairman*: Did any of you know anything about sugar? Yes, our manager did. He had been in sugar all his life, and he was a partner and a very competent man. He had been with the Pyramid Company.
2162. Had he any risk in the adventure? He lost £250—his all, everything he had.
2163. Did this in your opinion arise entirely from want of suitable labour to reap the crops? If we had had labour to cut our crops in the field we would have cleared at least £2,000.
2164. Was the machinery of a good description? Yes.
2165. Had you a vacuum pan? Yes.
2166. Was the sugar of good quality? Yes; I sold the sugar at from £19 to £24 a ton, which was a good profit.
2167. Had you two sets of rollers or one? One set. I used to average a very good price in Melbourne. I sold No. 1 white sugar at £24 a ton.

W.D. Hobson. 2168. *By Mr. King*: To what cause do you attribute your failure both in sugar and tobacco? In regard to sugar there is no doubt about it that it was the want of labour to cut the cane. In regard to the tobacco it was partly owing to inexperience. Sugar cannot be cultivated without black labour. We find that as soon as a white labourer gets a month's pay he does not think the work good enough and he wants to leave the district.

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2169. What would you suggest as a remedy, which would enable tropical agriculture to be carried on successfully? Until such time as we can plough the ground it will be absolutely necessary that we have an abundant supply of cheap and reliable labour. Every man with intelligence will see the correctness of this. White men will not work with the hoe. With regard to corn growing, our first crops never yield such successful returns, but after two or three crops they yield better returns.

2170. *By Mr. Cowley*: Can you give any reason for that? No; the best soil is on the other side of the Barron River; it yields forty busbels to the acre, and gives two crops to the year.

WEDNESDAY, 16 JANUARY, 1889.

CAIRNS DISTRICT.

(At Cairns.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

MARTIN PATRICK BOYLE FANNING, examined:

M.P.D.
Fanning.

2171. *By the Chairman*: What are you, Major Fanning? I am police magistrate at Cairns and also Polynesian inspector.

16 Jan., 1889.

2172. Before coming to Cairns you were police magistrate at Port Douglas? Yes; and Polynesian protector.

2173. It has come to the knowledge of the Commission, that at Port Douglas there are a number of boys who were at work on Bribrí, and who allege that they are due eighteen months' wages. Do you know anything about them? It is so long ago that I really cannot remember anything about them, further than that I know that some of the boys on Bribrí were unpaid at the time of Mr. Faviel's insolvency.

2174. How long were you police magistrate at Port Douglas? Five years.

2175. *By Mr. King*: How long is it since you left there? Last June or July, I think.

2176. *By the Chairman*: Is it not customary for the boys to be paid every six months? That is the rule, but I was under the impression that these boys were under somewhat different circumstances from the others. They were a lot of boys who came from Mackay. The boys that were engaged in the first or compulsory term of service were all paid off and sent to their respective homes in the islands, unless they agreed to remain in the colony for a further time. Afterwards there were a number of boys who came from Mackay under a second agreement; and I did not consider that these boys were subject to the same rules or conditions as the boys were who arrived straight from the islands and landed at Port Douglas. I thought that their position was different.

2177. Did you visit the plantation and see that the boys were properly treated in accordance with the Polynesian Act? I have been out once or twice. I had no means of going there, unless I was to pay for it out of my own money.

2178. If I understand you correctly, you know nothing whatever about the payment of wages to Polynesians? Not after the first time-expired boys returned to their own homes. I know very little after that. I received the wages regularly and paid them into the bank, and before the boys left for their homes I paid them off and got all their receipts.

2178a. Perhaps for your information I may tell you that the present police magistrate at Port Douglas states that there are something like eighteen boys who were under an agreement with the proprietors of Bribrí plantation, besides others who, as you say, came from Mackay. It is not the Mackay boys who complain of not being paid, but the boys who were under agreement. The police magistrate further states that he has placed the whole facts of the case before the Colonial Secretary, who has instructed him that if the men like they can go and enter into other contracts; that the men say "No; we want to be paid first," and it appears that there is nothing in the Polynesian Act to compel the police magistrate to send the men away. The result is that they are hanging about Port Douglas, hoping against hope that some day they will be paid their wages. What the Commissioners desire to know is, as this occurred antecedent to Mr. Eglington's arrival in Port Douglas, are you, as his predecessor in office, able to throw some light on the matter? The time is so far gone that I really almost at present forget all particulars. I remember that I considered that those men were not under my control. The boys first arrived at Cairns and were passed on to Mrs. Parker at Port Douglas, and those are boys whom I call men whose first period of service has not expired, and I consider that they were under different rules to those who were hired by Mr. Faviel at Mackay.

2179. *By Mr. Cowley*: Were you not aware that all islanders, unless holders of exempt tickets, came under the Polynesian Act? I was not aware at that time. I considered at that time, and I had no further directions to follow, that those men should have reported to me whether the money was paid or not, because I had no means placed at my disposal to go out there unless I was to walk.

2180. Were you not aware that all those islanders, no matter where their agreements were made, were under the Act, unless specially exempt? They were under the Act at first. I understood that all those who entered into fresh agreements then came under "*The Masters and Servants Act.*" 2181. But

2181. But not under the Polynesian Act? I do not think that they were under the Polynesian Islanders Act, further than that their master would be compelled to pay them. But I did not think, as Polynesian inspector, that I had the same power over those boys as over boys whose first term of service had not expired.

M. P. B.
Fanning.

16 Jan., 1885.

2182. Do you know it now? Yes; I was not aware then, because I had never anything to do with them, and there was no regular register book in the office, and no ledger; in point of fact, I made up a small ledger of my own.

2183. Did you not have the Polynesian Act in the office? Yes; I had.

2184. Was not a copy of the Government register in your office? They were sent up from below—from Mackay, or the head office. But I looked on that more in the light that I should know who they were in case of their being assaulted, so as to look after them, which I did as far as I possibly could.

2185. Are we to understand from you that you had no Polynesian register in your office? There was none supplied.

2186. Not from the head office? No.

2187. Did those islanders ever apply to you for their money? I am now dealing with those islanders in arrears.—Those that came from Mackay, and the first lot that came from New Guinea, were paid off. Then when Mr. Faviel was almost going insolvent, although I believed that I had no power in the matter, I wired that fact to the head office.

2188. At the expiration of the first six months of their time, did any of the men apply to you and say that they had not been paid? No; they did not, that I remember.

2189. The first intimation of it was just previous to the insolvency? Yes; and as soon as I became aware of it I wired to the head office that I thought that there was a certain amount of wages due by Mr. Faviel.

2190. Did you or the Department take any steps whatever to obtain the wages? We took steps in Port Douglas. We got all the men in, and got all their bills made out for wages due, and made affidavits as to the correctness of the accounts, and they were sent down to the trustee of the insolvent estate.

2191. That was done as soon as practicable? As soon as the affairs had gone into insolvency.

2192. Were copies of those claims sent to the Department in Brisbane? I don't know if they were, but they were sent to the trustee. The men came in, and Mr. Collard drew up the particulars and took the affidavits.

2193. Who was Mr. Collard? He was clerk of petty sessions.

2194. Could not Mr. Collard have sent them down? I don't know.

2195. Then you do not know from your own knowledge if they ever went down to the trustee? I am certain that they did.

2196. As Polynesian inspector did you get any acknowledgement of the receipt of those claims for wages? I think some of them were sent back for amendment, or something.

2197. Was any part of the money ever been remitted to you as Polynesian inspector? No; not one farthing.

2198. Then is this all that has been done to endeavour to get the money for these men? That is all that I am aware of. I am certain that particulars went down to the trustee in insolvency.

2199. But were you not aware, as Polynesian inspector, that you could take action against the mortgagee for six months of these wages due? I was not aware of it.

2200. Did you never apply to the Crown Law Office for advice in this matter? I did not know—in fact I did not think—that I had any great responsibility connected with those particular islanders.

2201. *By the Chairman:* Do you know that "The Stations Wages Act" makes it compulsory for the mortgagee when he forecloses on a station to pay six months' wages, if they are due? I am aware that wages come first on any mortgagee.

2202. *By Mr. Cowley:* Who has possession of Bribri plantation now? The bank.

2203. What bank? The Queensland National.

2204. *By Mr. King:* Are you sure it is not the Bank of Australasia? I know that the Bank of Australasia was at one time.

2205. *By Mr. Cowley:* You believe that at present it is the Queensland National Bank? I would not like to be sure about it.

2206. Did they take possession as mortgagees? They sent Mr. Pearson up from Brisbane to act as trustee.

2207. Was a copy of the agreements with the kanakas sent to the head office in Brisbane? Yes; and a copy was kept in my office, and one was sent to the plantation. There are copies in the office still.

2208. Did the head office ever instruct you to take any steps to recover these wages? Not at all.

2209. *By the Chairman:* You are Polynesian inspector for the Cairns district? Yes.

2210. Can you tell us the number of kanakas employed in this district? Three hundred and eighty-seven. Those are all under agreement. I know nothing about the others.

2211. Are they all on sugar plantations? Yes; all between the Pyramid and Swallows.

2212. Beyond those two plantations does no one employ them? No; I hold agreements for all those 387, and a complete register of them as well, and a complete set of books is kept up to date.

2213. Are those boys paid their wages every six months? Every six months; sometimes a fortnight or three weeks after that, but never more.

2214. Do the boys receive the money themselves?—How do you do when you are paid the money by the planter? If the money when it becomes due is not paid within a reasonable time, I write to the planter asking for it. They send the amount in by cheque, accompanied with particulars, such as seven boys at £3 10s., and so on, and I check it with my own book. I send all the savings bank books to the postmaster, together with the cheque. He then enters them in the different books in the savings bank. I then call for them and enter the amount paid opposite every name in the ledger and cash-book.

2215. Then you do not pay the money to the boys? No.

2216. Is that in accordance with instructions? Yes; it is only when they are being paid off that the boys are brought in to receive their money.

2217. *By Mr. King:* Then the boys do not see their money? They do not; but I tell them on board ship that they could see it. I get an interpreter from each lot, from each island, and I get the agents to explain that their wages will be received by me, and that I will be responsible for them, and that it will be lodged in the bank.

2218. *By*

- M.P.B. Fenning.
16 Jan., 1889.
2218. *By the Chairman*: Do you think that the boys coming here understand the nature of the agreement? Yes; I take every pains to get them to understand it. I get all the boys from the different islands together, and get the agents and interpreters to tell them that they have to serve such and such a term, for which they will get so much money, and tobacco, and one thing and another.
2219. *By Mr. King*: Are the boys not allowed under the Act to draw their money when they want it? I think the Act is silent on that point. It is for their own benefit that the money is paid into the savings bank.
2220. But you cannot benefit a man by keeping his money against his will? No.
2221. If any of the boys die, what becomes of the money? I get notice from the plantation stating that the boy has died, and they call on the doctor to report, which he does. They also send a cheque for the balance of wages due, and I then check it, and I fill up a form in accordance with the Act and forward the money and form to Mr. Woodward, in Brisbane.
2222. Has it ever happened that the relatives of deceased islanders have received any of the money left behind them? Not to my knowledge.
2223. Do you know what the opinion of the islanders is on the subject? I do not know. In fact, they understand very little, and it is difficult to get them to understand what you wish.
2224. *By Mr. Couleay*: Do you visit all the employers of labour in the district? I do. I was going out last week and I heard that the Commission had arrived, so I did not go.
2225. You say that no boy has applied to you for wages. If they were to apply to you for the wages every six months would you give it to them? No; not without authority. I would not do so on my own account here.
2226. If a man applied for the money you had put into the savings bank for him at the end of his six months' service would you give it to him? Not unless I received special instructions from the head office. It would lead to these boys buying things in town that ought to be supplied by the plantation.
2227. Then you do not know that by refusing to give these boys their money you would be acting in direct contravention to the Act? That is a point I would like to study well before I gave my answer. I know that no payment to a Pacific Islander is properly made unless he is paid before an inspector or police magistrate.
2228. You have stated how you manage with a deceased islander's money when it is paid over to you by his employer. Have you ever paid any of that money to a deceased kanaka's friends? Not a half-penny. I never could. In the first instance, it would cause a lot of trouble, and if there was any application made to me for the wages of a deceased islander, I should most decidedly refer the matter down below.
2229. Has there ever been any application made to you for money by a deceased islander's friends? A brother came in one morning to me here on a matter of that sort, but I have not seen him since, although I told him to come back again.
2230. Do the islanders ever come to you and make complaints? No; I encourage them to come and make complaints to me if anything happens. I have given myself a great deal of trouble in connection with those islanders and have gone out of my way to serve them.
2231. Do you think it is generally known amongst the settlers in this district that they are liable to a penalty if they employ islanders unless under an agreement made before you? I dare say that some of them are acquainted with the rule that the islanders must be under agreement. They give very little thought to that sort of thing.
2232. But the previous employer is entitled to his return passage money? Yes.
2233. Then in those instances the previous employer is being cheated out of his return passage money? I am under the impression that he would not be entitled to the £5 unless the labourer was re-engaged under Form G. He must be under Form G.
2234. Are you aware that any man who employs a kanaka unless under a written agreement made before you is liable to a penalty? I am aware of it.
2235. Up to the present time you know of no farmers or settlers in this district employing islanders, except those employed on sugar plantations? I do not.
2236. Are there any agreements in your office? No; not beyond those with the sugar planters. There were a few about a month or two ago. A man got three or four boys under agreement from the Government, but they were paid in my presence and cleared out.
2237. *By Mr. King*: With regard to the inspection of the islanders when they are landed, is it you who inspects them? Yes.
2238. Are you aware that islanders have been landed in such a condition that they have never been able to do any work since? I am not. The doctor goes on board and he passes or rejects.
2239. Are you aware that boys have been passed by the doctor and inspector whose employer at the time refused to take them? I heard of complaints being made that there were one or two boys passed that ought not to have been passed, but I consulted with the doctor and the men were passed on with the rest to the manager of the plantation. In this particular case to which you allude the manager of the plantation said he had never seen such a fine lot of boys delivered in Cairns.
2240. Are you aware that the employers have to pay wages to the boys whether they work or not after they are taken to the plantation? Of course they have to. Dr. Koch is a good medical officer, and a man who enters into it with spirit and when once he passes a batch of recruits they are fit for any plantation.
2241. You would act entirely on the doctor's opinion? Yes.
2242. And disregard the protest of the employer? Yes; because if the protest of the employer was allowed to go on, then out of a batch of, say, 100, he might say "I will take so and so (pointing to them); I think all the others are worthless," and that would throw the whole of the remainder of the batch into the hands of some other person. That would be unfair.
2243. *By Mr. Couleay*: Do you know if the medical officer inspects the islanders regularly? Yes; the medical officer attends regularly.
2244. Is he a Polynesian inspector by virtue of his office? No, I do not think so; he is simply the medical man.
2245. Every police magistrate is a Polynesian protector by virtue of his office? Yes.

2246. Do the Polynesians in this district enjoy good health, as a rule? As a rule, they do. Some of the lads at the Pyramid are not so strong as they might be.

2247. Have you had any complaints from kanakas as to ill-treatment or being ill-fed? No; I have not. On one occasion when I saw them I asked them if the proper rations had been given them, and I was told the full rations of meat was not given because it was the wish of the doctor that it should be reduced on account of health.

2248. Have you ever had any come to you and complain of ill-treatment or bad food? The only thing they complained about was that some came in and asked about their tobacco.

2249. *By Mr. King*: As police magistrate, do the Polynesians in this district give you any trouble? No.

2250. There are some Javaneese in the district—do they ever come before you? Very seldom. I have had one or two complaints, but, as a rule, they are an exceedingly well-ordered lot, as far as I can speak of them.

2251. They do not seem to you to be objectionable? Not a bit.

2252. What do you say about the Chinese? I am rather in favour of them. They seem an excellent lot of men in every way. Their conduct is remarkably good. They give no trouble at all.

2253. You mentioned to me this morning that there was a considerable amount of mangoes put up in special packets and exported from Bombay? Yes; that is the case.

2254. Are they sought after, and is there a good market for them? Yes; a very good market in England, because I brought some myself from Bombay.

2255. *By the Chairman*: Have you any knowledge how they are prepared? I have not.

2256. *By Mr. King*: Could you find out how it is done? I will write for it and will communicate with you the answer.

M.P.B.
Fanning.

16 Jan., 1889.

ROBERT TAYLOR HARTLEY recalled:

2257. *By the Chairman*: Have you prepared a return of the special leases held in the Cairns land agents' R.T. Hartley district, so far as they are recorded in the books of the Land Office, Cairns? Yes: I produce it. [See Appendix B.]

16 Jan., 1889.

JOHN MCPHERSON examined:

2258. *By the Chairman*: What are you? I am a selector on the Mulgrave.

J. McPherson.

2259. What is the area of your selection? One thousand two hundred and eighty acres.

2260. Is it conditional purchase or homestead? I took it up under the Land Act of 1876, and I have since brought it under the 1884 Act.

16 Jan., 1889

2261. Have you cultivated any portion of the selection? There are about forty acres under maize, about fifty acres say. I took three tons to Cairns, but could not get the balance owing to the want of roads and bridges. I got £8 10s. a ton for what I brought in, and I would make money at that if I had roads. I destroyed nearly 1,000 bushels, because I could not get it conveyed to market.

2262. What facilities do you require to bring your produce to market? I want a road, so that a pack-horse can travel on it. If I can get £5 10s. a ton I can make money.

2263. Is there no road leading to your selection? No; except what I made myself.

2264. Are you within a Divisional Board? I am on the board myself.

2265. Did you apply to have roads made? Yes.

2266. Would the board not consent to the road? The majority were against it.

2267. Is there any suggestion you can offer by which the farming industry in this district can be assisted? The Land Bill is a failure. The Government should grant us this land at 2s. rental and 10s. of improvements per acre, and lease it for five years, and allow the 2s. to go towards making roads. There is plenty of good land, only it lies a good way back. We want roads.

2268. *By Mr. Cowley*: The only suggestion you can make is a road? Simply, I am ruined because I have no road to market.

2269. How far are you from the main road? The main road is the Russell River road. I am three miles from that, and a river intervenes. I am in the Mulgrave electorate.

2270. What is the character of the country between your selection and the road? There is about a mile and a half of scrub, the rest forest.

2271. Is it all level or hilly? It is level, but it is devil-devil ground.

2272. Is there a track through the mile and a half of scrub? Yes.

2273. Could you not pack over it to the main road? It goes through part of Walker's selection. It was stopped by the Minister for Lands against the wish of the Divisional Board. The Minister, in reply to a requisition sent to him by the Divisional Board, said that no road should go through Walker's selection.

SATURDAY, 19 JANUARY, 1889.

JOHNSTONE RIVER DISTRICT.

(At Innisfail.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

JAMES O'HALLERAN examined:

- J.O'Halleran. 2274. *By Mr. King*: What is your position here? I am acting manager of this estate at present.
 2275. What is its name? Innisfail.
 19 Jan., 1889. 2276. What is the total acreage of the estate? There are 1,265 acres, and another lot of 1,265 acres, in all 2,530, and there are two homesteads which bring it up to over 2,900 acres.
 2277. How many acres have you had under cultivation. About 400 acres.
 2278. How many are under cultivation now? Three hundred and twenty acres.
 2279. Is it all planted with cane? Yes.
 2280. How many acres of cane were crushed at the mill this season? None; we sold it to Goondi.
 2281. How many acres were cut? Two hundred and ten acres.
 2282. Do you know what capital is invested in the plantation and mill? £36,000 up to last season. I do not know what was invested last season, but altogether between £35,000 or £36,000.
 2283. Was that all that was invested or was it solely Mr. Fitzgerald's investment in it? Simply Mr. Fitzgerald's investment in it.
 2284. Is there any debt on the place? I do not think so. There is a mortgage. I do not know what it is, but I think it is between £36,000 and £37,000. Miss O'Reilly was the mortgagee, and is now in possession of the place. In July next I will have been four years in her employ.
 2285. What description of labour do you use on the plantation? Whenever we can get them, kanakas.
 2286. Chinese? No, we do not employ them.
 2287. Javanese? Yes.
 2288. Europeans? Yes, we employ them, too.
 2289. Malays? Yes.
 2290. How many kanakas have you at present? Nineteen at present.
 2391. What wages do you pay them? From £15 to £20 a year and rations.
 2292. Are they time-expired boys? Yes, all time-expired boys.
 2393. How many Europeans do you employ? We employ seven at present; we employ more during the season.
 2294. What wages do they get? Some £1 a week and some 15s., and some of them have 14s. They came under agreement from Townsville.
 2295. Do you find that the Europeans stand the work well in the field? No, I do not.
 2296. What do they complain about? They will not work with the hoe. They will do ploughing and following horses, but they will do nothing else. They growl against it. They won't do it.
 2297. Even at the plough, do you consider that they do the same amount of work that a ploughman would do on the Downs or about Brisbane? Yes; they can do their work as well as the men in the south. But I do not believe they can stand hoeing cane or planting it. In fact, they will not do it.
 2298. What class of labour does best in the cane? I really believe the kanakas do. They are the most reliable labour we have in the colony. That is my opinion of the matter.
 2299. Has this plantation been paying? Well, we just keep ourselves since Miss O'Reilly took it over. It was very backward when we took it over. We can't get labour; that is our drawback.
 2300. Is any of the land on this plantation getting exhausted? Not a bit of it; there is not better land in the colony.
 2301. What sort of seasons have you had lately? Very bad for the past three seasons. Just as the plantation was looking well, the grub came and destroyed a lot of the cane, and we had to replant it. We replanted it three times. We are expecting a crop this season.
 2302. How much did the grub destroy? Over 100 acres of plant cane last season.
 2303. What kind of a grub is it? One of those wood grubs—just the same as a wood grub only a smaller class with a hard red head and white body. We find it in the soil under the roots of the cane.
 2304. What does the grub turn into after the grub state? I do not know what it turns into. We send boys after the plough to pick it up.
 2305. Have you never taken one of these grubs and put it into a box and kept it to see what it would turn into? No. The Mourilyan people sent it down to Brisbane, and they could not do anything with it.
 2306. You have not had full crops of late owing to the seasons and the deficiency of labour? Exactly.
 2307. What do you consider the weight of cane per acre on this plantation? Forty tons. I have seen 60 and 70 tons taken off the top selection.
 2308. Do the white men keep their health when working in the field? Pretty fairly.
 2309. Do you have many go into the hospital? Yes, we have a few.
 2310. How do the kanakas stand it? Very well entirely.
 2311. What percentage of deaths do you have amongst the kanakas? We have not had one death during four years. I can't speak of before that time.
 2312. How do the Malays and Javanese stand it? They stand it well enough; but they are a class we cannot rely upon. The kanaka is not cheap labour by any means, but it is labour you can rely on when you have it.
 2313. Do your kanakas give any trouble to the police? Not the slightest; not a bit. One got into trouble here with a white man about three months ago. They had a row. They stuck the white man up for grog; that is all I know.
 2314. Did

2314. Did you say that the plantation has only paid expenses and barely that? Barely that.

2315. What was the total expenditure last year? I really could not say, about £1,300.

2316. What is the reason in your opinion that the plantation does not pay more than bare expenses? 19 Jan., 1889.

The present state of the country and the want of labour. It is very hard to get reliable labour for a plantation. A plantation can't afford to pay 15s. a week and rations, and that is very low wages; and even if you offer that to a kanaka it is hard to get the labour. You have to turn round and employ white labour, and you can't pay them less than 15s. or £1 a week to work on a plantation, and that rate of wages won't pay. A plantation can employ white labour in some things, but not in work in the field. A European is profitable labour to work after horses. Kanaka labour is not good after horses, and is only good where white men will not work.

2317. Have you grown any other crops besides sugar? No; only sugar. The land won't grow corn. I have seen it tried. It will not mature.

2318. It grows too rank? Yes; it won't mature.

2319. You have different kinds of tropical trees in the garden, do they grow well? Yes; oranges, limes, lemons, mangoes, and mulberries grow well. The mulberries grow best of all.

2320. What are the wages that other people give to European labour in this district outside of sugar planting? What does the Divisional Board give? Eight shillings a day.

2321. Are there any gold diggings in the district? Yes; at the Russell River.

2322. Is there any population on them? Yes; there is a white population of from fifty to sixty on the field at present.

2323. Then that does not operate much to keep up the rate of wages? Not much at present.

2324. Is there anybody in the place who keeps a record of the temperature and takes the thermometer? No; not at Innisfail. I think Mr. Canny keeps it at the Queensland.

2325. By the Chairman: How long have you been on the plantation? Six years.

2326. Have you manufactured sugar here? Yes.

2327. How many tons of sugar has the plantation generally yielded during a season? The two last seasons we crushed we turned out 210 tons and 215 tons. We did not crush during any other years.

2328. What price was sugar when you came here? £36 and £40 a ton.

2329. What price is it now? About £23 a ton.

2330. Do you not think that the price of sugar has had something to do with the present position of the plantation? Yes, it has had a great deal to do with it—the fall in the price of sugar and the scarcity of labour.

2331. What hours do the kanakas work? They work ten hours a day, from 6 a.m. till 6 p.m. with an hour for breakfast and dinner.

2332. What hours do the Europeans work? About nine and a-half hours.

2334. Do both the kanakas and Europeans work during the whole of the heat of the sun? Yes.

2335. The immigrants you say you engaged in Townsville at 14s. and 15s. a week, were they young or middle-aged men? Young men from eighteen to twenty-five or perhaps thirty years of age.

2336. What work were they engaged in? In farm labourer's work, in making themselves generally useful.

2337. Do they show any unwillingness to work in the cane field? I never saw a white man who would continue to work in it at all.

2338. If you made an alteration in their hours of labour,—if you allowed the men to rest during the heat of the noonday sun and to pull up their time in the course of the morning and evening, would not that make a difference to them? They prefer to finish their day's work when they once start. They would rather finish work than knock off.

2339. Have you made any proposal of the kind to them? No. I often let them have a short spell if the day is very hot, and pull up at night. I often let them have two hours at dinner time. We are very careful of our ploughmen and horses, and are bound to do it.

2340. In other tropical climates it is customary for men to cease working from about 11 o'clock till about 2 o'clock and then make up for it in the cooler part of the day, so as to avoid the intense heat of the noonday sun. I would have no objection to it; it is all the same if they pull up and make full time.

2341. Is the objection that those newly-arrived immigrants have to working in the cane field to the great heat? No, they might say "It's pretty hot," but they never say that they would prefer knocking off for a few hours and make it up in the evening.

2342. What is their real objection to working in the cane field? It is, that they will not go into the cane field hoeing; they do not believe in hoeing, they say it is not work for white men, only for black fellows.

2343. Do they work side by side with the kanakas? No, it is wrong that such a thing should be done, to put two distinct classes of labour to work in the same place. It happened that I had some Javanese working on the same field with white men, and by accident they came to work together, and the white men refused to work. They could not work alongside the Javanese as the Javanese took too much out of them.

2344. Is the Javanese labour you are employing here a success? Not a great success. It is better than nothing if we can't get anything better. It is better than Chinese.

2345. When the time of the Javanese expires, would you be inclined to renew their agreements? I would not care much about them if I could get kanakas. They are a class of labour that if they can best you they will best you, and keep you bested. They will lie in their huts and pretend to be sick, and when you go out of their hut after seeing them and go into the field they will rise up and commence hoeing. Fitzgerald got twenty-six from Java, and they cost £500 to bring here. They cleared out for home before their time had expired. They would not work, and he had some of them before the court, and they were sent to gaol; but when they came out again they were just the same. They will often stick you up when you are crushing.

2346. Then you think that the kanaka is the most reliable labour? Yes, you have him when you want him, and he never sticks you up by refusing to work. If you have a kanaka by agreement he will do just as he is told, unless he is sick, and then we send him to the hospital. The Javanese will lie down three or four days a week and won't work.

2347. I

- J. O'Halloran. 2347. I suppose that as acting manager of this plantation you are friendly disposed to your countrymen. Are you of opinion that plantation labour is suitable for European labour? The greatest part of it is.
- 19 Jan, 1889. 2348. And Europeans can perform it? Yes, they can.
2349. And the heat and the climate is no obstacle to their doing it? No, not a bit. I have not heard them complain much about the heat.
2350. Then what is the work that you would put the kanaka to? I would put him to hoeing, planting, and cutting cane.
2351. Is the European capable of doing that? Yes, but he won't do it. I have seen it and experienced it.
2352. Then you expend on this plantation about £1,300 a year? It is a great deal more when we are crushing.
2353. What was your total expenditure for last year? About £1,300, but we were not crushing.
2354. What would have been the amount if you had been crushing sugar? About £5,000.
2355. *By Mr. King*: You sold your cane to Goondi? Yes and we got 11s. a ton for it, or 12s. I can't say exactly.
2356. Did you cut and deliver it? I cut it and delivered it at the bank of the river here, and they took it away.
2357. *By the Chairmen*: Then at present you say—from your knowledge as acting manager—that the plantation is just paying its way—its working expenses? Yes.
2358. Then there is no interest being paid on the original debt? No it is dead capital gone.
2359. What is the value of the plantation land? £7 an acre.
2360. Would it realise £7 an acre if put into the market? I do not think so in the present state of the sugar industry. I am quite sure it would not represent the money sunk in it.
2361. *By Mr. Cowley*: What varieties of cane do you grow here? Rose bamboo, rappoe, meera, and others, in patches of about twenty acres. We do not have a nursery. There is also striped Singapore, which is the best cane I have seen on Innisfail.
2362. Which is the best kind? Striped Singapore.
2363. Have you grown "lahina" cane? No.
2365. Then you say that as far as your soil is concerned, striped Singapore is the best cane you have? Yes. The three best varieties are striped Singapore, rose bamboo, and mera. We have got a paddock of "Daniel Dupont," and it is doing very well. It is on nineteen acres of good land.
2367. Is it a class of cane that you could plant a large quantity of? I could not say; but from what I have heard of it I would not say that I approve of it.
2368. Is it a different cane from the others? Yes, and very hard to trash.
2369. Are any of the other sorts bad to trash? Yes, we have the elephant. But the others are very easy to trash?
2370. Do you always trash? Not always. We give the cane one trashing, and if we have time we give it two.
2371. Would white men trash cane? They would not do two rows a day. They won't do this sort of work.
2372. Have you had any disease in the cane during the last six years except the grub? No.
2373. Did you have any rust? Yes, we had rust.
2374. In what variety? We had it in cherebon, but not a great deal.
2375. Do you try anything to destroy the grub? We only kept picking them up after ploughing the land and burning them.
2376. Have you ever seen a large gray moth about here? Yes.
2377. Are they related in any way to this grub? I really cannot say.
2378. Have you seen plenty of them about? Yes; a good few.
2379. Do the kanakas agree with the whites well? Yes; very well.
2380. Are they addicted to drinking? No; I may say that I have seen them with a drop of liquor; but very rarely.
2381. Do the white men object to you employing kanakas? No; they do not object to it. They never say anything about it. They never interfere with them.
2382. All your islanders are time-expired boys? Yes.
2383. Are they under agreement with you? Yes; some of their agreements expired on New Year's Day and some are now off.
2384. Have you much trouble in obtaining island labour? We have not tried to get them from the islands.
2385. Have you much trouble in getting the time-expired men? Sometimes we have. Sometimes they come readily and sometimes not.
2386. Are you full handed at present? No; not half.
2387. And there is considerable trouble in getting a sufficient quantity of labour? There is.
2388. How many hands are you short now? About sixty.
2389. If they were easily obtained would you increase your area of cultivation? Yes; I am sure the proprietors would.
2390. Do any women come amongst your boys? Yes, there are a few female kanakas, and they work well and are not any trouble. I do not have much trouble with the kanakas.
2391. Have you a medical attendant who comes regularly to the plantation, or how do you do with the boys when they are ill? I send them to the hospital, or send for Dr. White, who is paid to come and attend to the kanakas. It is better to send a boy if he is bad to the hospital.
2392. What is the state of health amongst your kanakas now? Very good, and we have not had a death on the plantation for four years; in fact, I may really say for five years.
2393. Since you have been here did your proprietors ever try to work the place with white labour only? Mr. Charles Nolan did. The crop was sold to him and he worked it with white labour and did so at a great loss. He did not employ a coloured man at all.
2394. What was the amount of his loss? I could not say, but he said he lost between £500 and £600 for three months' crushing.
2395. Are you aware if this is entirely attributable to the employment of white labour? A great part of it was.
2396. What did he pay for the cane? I do not know.

2397. How

2397. How many acres did he buy? About 200 acres.
2398. How much did he get from the whole lot? I don't know.
3399. At the present price of sugar, if you could get plenty of reliable labour, could you pay expenses and interest, and increase your area? I think I could if I could get a fair season and reliable labour it would pay.
2400. If you could get thirty tons to the acre and sell it at 11s. per ton, as you did with your last crop, would it pay, with reliable labour? It would.
2401. Would it not greatly interfere with the workings of the place if white labour ceased work from 11 a.m. till 2 p.m.? It would not do in crushing time at all.
2402. You say the white men refused to work with the Javanese. Why? Because of the colour.
2403. Why do you employ Javanese, if as you say they are lazy workmen, who are always pretending to be ill? I would not give them an hour's labour if I could get kanakas.
2404. Are they better than white labour in field work? Yes, I prefer them to white labour in the cane field, trashing and cutting, and hoeing round about the sugar.
2405. You said that the greatest part of plantation work was suitable to white labour? Yes, all horse work, harrowing, ploughing, and carting cane. I believe in white labour to do that, because really it is the cheapest labour you can get. Then there are the sugar boilers, engineers, and mechanics.
2406. What is about the highest wages you could afford to pay to good ploughmen and horse-drivers? £1 a week and tucker, and they would have to be very good at that.
2407. Do you ever experience any difficulty with those white labourers; do they ever break their agreements and run away? I have seen them do it at different times, but very seldom. They generally carry out their agreements, which are for six months, and at the expiration of the six months they ask for a rise of wages, and if they do not get it go away.
2408. Then you can't depend on retaining a white man in your service for six months? No; they will not stay unless their wages are raised.
2409. What are the principal drawbacks to the successful cultivation of sugar? The labour question is the greatest drawback, and the low price of sugar.
2410. You have good means of communication by water? Yes, the very best on the Johnstone River. The "Palmer" or the "Burdekin" can come up to the wharf and take the sugar away; and there is no great expense in it, because the sugar is taken down in trucks to the wharf and put on board the steamer.
2411. Of course the price of sugar always affects the price of labour? Yes.
2412. The lower the price of sugar the lower wages you can afford? Exactly.
3413. Then it all results in the price of labour? Yes.
2414. *By the Chairman:* What occupation does Mr. Nolan follow? He is a general storekeeper. He has no plantation of his own.
2415. Had he any experience in the crushing of sugar-cane? Not that I know of.
2416. He merely bought the cane from you as a speculation? Yes.
2517. Without having any knowledge of the business? I do not think he had any.
2418. May not that have had something to do with his loss of £600? Yes.
2419. You would not say because Mr. Nolan entered into a speculation of which he knew nothing, and which resulted in a loss, that that would be an argument against the employment of white labour? No, I never knew that he had any knowledge of sugar.
2420. But in crushing cane you require to employ skilled labour? Yes; we do.
2421. You would not take an inexperienced man and put him in charge of your vacuum pan? No.
2422. Who joined Mr. Nolan in his speculation? The two Wanlesses.
2423. Were they experienced men? I do not know.
2424. Who managed the place? The Wanlesses, I think; at least young Wanless was the engineer, and the old man had very little to do with the working of the place.
2425. Were you here at that time? I was.
2426. Do you know whether the Wanlesses had any experience in the supervision of a sugar plantation? I could not say, but I do not think so.
2427. One was an engineer? Yes; a locomotive engineer.
2428. Who was in charge of the mill? Wanless, the engineer, and the old one had charge of the outside work.
2429. Had they anyone to manage for them? Yes, there was Mr. McDonald.
2430. Is he an experienced sugar planter? I have heard that he was, but I never saw him. He had a plantation once of his own, and lost it. He was their manager, and kept the books.
2431. Now that you know the place, would you, if the crop was offered to you cheap, purchase it if you had to take it off with white labour? No, I would not, unless I got it at a very good price.
2432. Supposing that the price of sugar increased, would you be able to offer more than £1 a week wages? Yes, I think I would.
2433. Have you had any experience in sugar growing outside of Queensland? No, and not a great deal in Queensland.
2434. Are you a farmer? Yes.
2435. From your knowledge of the district and climate, do you think that tropical fruits could be grown here? Yes.
2436. Do you think that Europeans are adapted for the growing of tropical fruits? Yes, I do so.
2437. Do you know of any land in this district leased to Chinamen? Yes, I do.
2438. By whom? The Government have leased it to them.
2439. For cultivation purposes? Yes.
2440. For the cultivation of tropical fruits? Bananas principally, and other fruits. I know of several selectors up the river who have leased their land to Chinamen.
2441. Do you know any Europeans in this district who are growing tropical fruits on their own land with their own labour, and without employing kanaka labour? Yes, I know some who are growing tropical fruit on the Johnstone River themselves, and making a success of it.
2442. What is the general health of the European population? Very good. I have not seen a case of fever for four years.
2443. Do you think that the general climate of the Johnstone admits of the employment of European labour? Yes, except working in the cane field, hoeing, &c.
2444. Speaking

- J.O'Halloran. 2444. Speaking of this plantation, the objection of the European labourer is simply to hoeing in the field? Yes, and working in the cane field.
- 19 Jan., 1889. 2445. You have said that you have not yet seen Europeans work side by side with kanakas? No.
2446. Are you able to say from your own knowledge that the white population would resent working with kanakas? I do not think that they would work with kanakas, but they need not be put side by side with kanakas.
2447. Then do you think that if the kanaka were put to his own particular work and the white man were put to his own particular work there would be no likelihood of any collision between them? No, not the slightest. I have never heard of any on the Johnstone.
2448. By Mr. Cowley: By "particular work," what do you mean? I mean white men following the plough, and horse and dray work, ploughing, harrowing, and the kanakas to be restricted to the field, hoeing, trashing, cutting, &c.
2449. You say that white men will not work at field work alongside of kanakas. If you put thirty white men into a cane-field to hoe by themselves would they do it? They would do it, but we could not afford to pay £1 a week to white men at the present price of sugar.
2450. Have you ever done any clearing of scrub on this land? We cleared between eighty acres and ninety acres this year with kanakas, and planted it ourselves.
2451. By the Chairman: Were only nineteen kanakas employed at it? Our average is about forty boys, but we have only nineteen at present.
2452. By Mr. Cowley: At the time of clearing the land, how many did you have? Thirty-eight.
2453. Are they adapted for that kind of work? Yes; some of them.
2454. By the Chairman: When you say that your average is forty islanders, is that exclusive of Javanese and Malays? No; taking them altogether.

(At Goondi.)

GEORGE EDGAR ADAMS examined.

- G.E.A. dares. 2455. By the Chairman: What are you, Mr. Adams? I am manager of the Goondi Plantation.
- 19 Jan., 1889. 2456. What experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar? Eight years—six years here.
2457. Have you any experience in the growth of other tropical products? None to speak of.
2458. What is the name of this estate? The Colonial Sugar Refining Company, Limited, Goondi mill.
2459. What is the total area belonging to the company here? 12,500 acres.
2460. How much is under cane? 2,300 acres under cane. There are about 200 acres on which the scrub is fallen and put under grass; also four acres of sweet potatoes.
2461. How many acres of cane were crushed at the mill last season? 1,127.
2462. And how many acres do you expect this coming season? We expect to crush 2,090 acres.
2463. How much sugar was made last season? 2,100 tons.
2464. How much molasses? About 60,000 gallons.
2465. What was done with the molasses? It was run away. We centrifugal it four times, which gives four classes of sugar before we run it away.
2466. Then it would not pay the company to deal with it? No, no more. We would waste more than it is worth to do so again.
2467. What amount of capital is invested in this plantation and mill? The general manager will reply to that.
2468. What rate of interest does it return on the capital invested? I will also get the general manager to reply to that.
2469. What is the annual amount of the working expenditure of the estate? I must leave that, too, to the general manager.
2470. What labour is employed to work the estate? I have Europeans, kanakas, and Chinese.
2471. What number of Chinese? I have made out a return to show you the labour, per diem, taking the year through that we have employed. This only shows wages men, not those working in contracts. I deal with a man and he finds his own men to carry out the work; I do not know how many he employs. I simply give you a return of the wages men, not those working on contract of which there are a great many. The return is as follows:—

1886 ...	99 Europeans	...	191 Kanakas	...	25 Chinese.
1887 ...	84 "	...	196 "	...	17 "
1888 ...	120 "	...	271 "	...	44 "

That shows that one European is employed for every two other men. This is taken from our wages sheet.

2472. What wages do you pay the kanakas? They average from £6 to £18; the general average would be £9.

2473. What wages do you pay the Chinese? 15s. to 17s. a week, and we find them.

2474. And board them? Yes.

2475. And what rate of wages is paid to the Europeans? From 20s. to 60s. a week with board. I have some giving as much as 80s.—special men, boiler makers, &c.

2476. And in addition to boarding and keeping all working hands on the estate you also house them? Yes.

4277. In addition to the wages paid and food given to the kanakas, what other articles do you supply them with? Clothing according to the Act—three shirts, four pairs of trousers, a hat, blauketa, and more if necessary. We supply them with tobacco, and medical attendance at the hospital here. The doctor comes out once a week. The men also get soap, knives, coats, pipes, matches. They do not require to find themselves in anything at all. They are also supplied with "flys" in the field to keep the rain off them and to enable them to get out of the sun on a hot day.

2478. By Mr. King: Do you let the kanakas have a piece of ground for cultivation? Yes: a piece of ground in which they can make a garden, and grow bananas. Some do so, and some do not.

2479. By Mr. Cowley: How many acres? About ten acres for the lot. They can get more. They nearly all make their gardens. They have to fence them off from each other,

2480. By

2480. *By the Chairman*: What labour do you find most suitable for field work on this estate? Kanaka. G. E. Adams.
2481. Have you employed European labour in field work? Yes.
2482. Are Europeans willing and able to do it? I first started Goondi with Europeans. The first piece of scrub fallen was done by Europeans. But they signally failed. 19 Jan., 1889.
2483. *By Mr. King*: Were they working by contract or by day work? Contract. There was a great deal of dissatisfaction, and they were always changing hands. Last year the mill broke down, and I offered to find the men, who had been in the mill, work in the field till it was repaired, but they told me that that was blackfellows' work, and they would sooner stop on and do nothing till the mill was put right. A few of the men went into the field, but their labour cost too much, and the work was badly done, and they said the heat was so great that they could not stand it.
2484. *By the Chairman*: Have you any Javenese? No; none.
2485. You employ Chinese labour as well as kanaka? Yes.
2486. Is that in work the kanaka could not do? The Chinese are employed in pick and shovel work, and with the axe, principally on contracts. The Chinaman is stronger physically, and more powerful than the kanaka, and is able to fall scrub, clear it, make roads, and make formations and excavations, better than the kanaka. The kanaka we find more suitable for field work, such as weeding, trashing, planting, hoeing, and such like.
2487. *By Mr. King*: Do you employ any whitemen with the kanakas? A whiteman is generally in charge of thirty boys.
2488. Are these gangers expected to work in the field? No, simply to superintend the boys and see that they do their work.
2489. What wages do you pay a ganger? From 25s. to 30s. and all found.
2490. *By the Chairman*: Is all the land cleared on the estate cultivated? No, some is grass land.
2491. By whom was the cleared land that is now under cultivation? Some I let to Europeans, and the balance by Chinamen. I suppose that out of the 2,700 acres cleared, 2,500 was done by Chinamen.
2492. I noticed as I came through the estate that there was a very large amount of timber on it, and a great many stumps still in the ground. How long does it take before you are able to render the land fit for the plough? It is generally thought in this district five years, but I hold that it takes seven years.
2493. *By Mr. King*: Is your land exceptionally heavily timbered? Yes, a lot of it is much more heavily timbered than most plantations. It costs more to clear it.
- 2493a. How much per acre does it cost to clear and burn off? From £5 to £7 5s. the acre, according to the timber. That is only felling and burning off, that is not making roads.
2494. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is that by contract? Yes; I find that is a fair job. The men working on the job make from 25s. to 30s. a week.
2495. *By Mr. King*: How much more would it cost to stump it and plough it once? The land you saw coming through the plantation could not be stumped under £30 or £40 an acre.
2496. Have you done any stumping? Yes, and found that it cost at one place more than twice the sum named. Stumping all depends upon the season, whether it is wet or dry.
2497. *By the Chairman*: When the land is free from these stumps do you think that Europeans, with horses and machinery, would be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour? Certainly, there is no doubt about it.
2498. How many acres of cane did you cultivate for every kanaka employed? I think that a kanaka would do about four acres.
2499. How many acres would a European work if he was able to use a plough and horses on the land? I have hardly had sufficient experience to say. Kanakas would be required to weed the cane even then.
2500. Do the kanakas employed in field work suffer in health? No. The results of the last two or three years have been very good.
2501. Does the field work affect the health of the Europeans? I have just now three of my best men living at the Victoria Plantation, as they cannot stand the heat.
2502. *By Mr. King*: What was the nature of the complaint? Malaria fever, diarrhoea, and dysentery.
2503. Are they often fatal? They used to be; they are getting better every year. I used to lose a great many men.
2504. Do the new hands complain of the heat? They complain of the heat, and say it is blackfellows' work.
2505. *By the Chairman*: Have you had Europeans and kanakas working side by side in the cane fields? Only in the case of the mill breaking down. I have now a gang of white men—about twenty—at contract work, and they are doing very slowly and are not getting on at all.
2506. If a white man refused to work with the kanakas, what would you do? I would never require them to do so.
2507. Is the presence of the kanakas on this plantation objectionable to the white population? I have never heard it. They say that it is absolutely necessary.
2508. *By Mr. King*: Does the cane grow well here?—Is the soil and climate suited for the cultivation of cane? Yes; particularly so, more so than in any other part of the colony. The heavy rainfall has a great deal to do with it.
2509. Does the cane suffer from any disease in this district? Yes; the grub.
2510. Those are the grubs that you showed to us—the larvae of the beetle? Yes.
2511. What have you tried to get rid of them? Limed the soil, and turned it up—ploughed it.
2512. Is lime efficacious? Yes, if put on in small quantities; but it is not proof in all cases.
2513. Have those grubs done any considerable damage to the crops? They carried off some 20 acres last year, just as if it had been frost-bitten.
2514. Did you lose the crushing of those 20 acres? We got half of what we ought to have obtained. The cane was destroyed, but I had it replanted again.
2515. *By the Chairman*: Have you recently received a visit from Dr. Kortmann? Yes.
2516. Had he just returned from a trip to Java? Yes. The company sent him there.
2517. Did he discover a new disease that is attacking the cane fields in that country? Yes; "serch."
2518. You had some cane imported from Borneo to this plantation? Yes; we had some 50 acres.
2519. What have you done with them? We planted them, and took them out again as soon as we heard of the disease and burnt all of them. We have since allowed the land to lie fallow.

- G. R. Adams. 2520. Then beyond the grub the cane in this plantation is in a healthy condition? Yes. It is suffering a little from drought; that is all.
- 19 Jan., 1889. 2521. *By Mr. Couley*: You say that the first scrub was cleared by Europeans. How much did they clear? At first 10 acres, and then they took 10 acres more, and then 20 acres more; that is 40 altogether.
2522. What price did you pay them per acre? £3 10s. for felling only. They would not do any more; they had no money.
2523. Did they make it pay at that price? No; the contractor lost money, and was a ganger with me for three years afterwards.
2524. Then those men were not employed by you on day labour, but by contract? Yes; by contract.
2525. You said you did a great deal of the work of the plantation by Chinamen? Yes.
2526. Could you do that work with South Sea Islanders if you had them? I do not think we could do it with kanakas. I could do it with Europeans. Kanakas do not shine in using the axe or in felling scrub.
2527. Then if you employed more kanakas you would employ more whites? Yes.
2528. And would be able to do without Chinamen? Yes. I think that could be done very easily.
2529. You said that you thought this land could be stumped at the end of seven years? Yes.
2530. At what cost? I could only give you a rough idea. I think from £6 to £8 an acre. Some would cost 30s. an acre, and others £3, to make it so that you could put a plough into it. That is not including the first ploughing, but rendering it possible to put the plough in.
2531. *By Mr. King*: There are some stumps it would be difficult to take out? Yes; they could be burnt out. The silky oak cannot be burnt out.
2532. How many times do you cut cane before replanting? I think four times. But I have now some fourth ratoons, which, on account of the drought, I have allowed to stand over; but it would pay the company if we had good seasons only to take off three cuttings.
2533. Is any of the land showing signs of exhaustion; are the crops diminishing owing to exhaustion of soil? I do not think it is getting exhausted; but I think some parts of the ground want a spell for four or five months. If it were possible to turn it up it would greatly improve it.
2534. If turned up and laid fallow for a year would it be as good as ever? Two or three months would do. There is soil on some parts of the plantation 15 feet deep.
2535. What kind of seasons have you had lately? In 1886 we had 156 inches of rain; in 1887, 148 inches; and in 1888, 106.92. Last season was a great deal too dry for this soil.
2536. Do you think you would have had more sugar if you had had more rain? I am quite certain of it. I think nearly 20 per cent. more sugar.
2537. Do you buy cane for the mill? Yes.
2538. Where do you buy it from? From Innisfail.
2539. What price do you pay? 11s. per ton.
2540. Is that cut and delivered? Cut and delivered into our punt.
2541. How far have you to bring it? Eight miles.
2542. Then at the present price of sugar you find that it pays to give that price to farmers who will grow sugar and sell it to you? Certainly it pays.
2543. What do you consider is the average weight of cane to the acre in a fair season, taking the plant cane and ratoons together? I will give you the plant cane first. Plant cane, taking it all round, will average about 27 tons to the acre on good land, first ratoons about 20 tons to the acre; second ratoons about 16 tons to the acre; and third ratoons about 12 tons to the acre.
2544. Could you afford to grow cane with European labour at that price? European labour cannot do it. I have tried it.
2545. But if European labourers were willing to do it, could you pay wages and sell cane at the price named if you were a grower? No; certainly not.
2546. Could the company afford to grow cane on this plantation with European labour and make a profit? No.
2547. *By Mr. Couley*: Some time ago you said it would take seven years before you could stump this land. Supposing it was now stumped, could you grow cane on the land entirely by European labour? No; certainly not, to make it pay. We could do much more than we do now, because it is all hand work now. Then we could get horse and plough at work, but even then we would have to hoe round the cane.
2548. But could not a great percentage of the work be done by Europeans? I am talking now about making it pay. It won't pay to employ only Europeans; but when this place is under the plough there is no doubt Europeans will be more largely employed for ploughing and such work; but kanakas would be wanted for hand weeding there is no doubt.
2549. What kinds of cane do you grow? Rappoe, principally; also, meera etamiti, big yellow, lahina, striped Singapore, Daniel Dupont, red rappoe, and a little from Fiji—treboe and lillian green.
2550. What varieties do you find best suited for sugar making? Rappoe and striped Singapore.
2551. By "best" I mean as an all-round cane both in the field and in the mill? Well, everyone likes meera best in the mill, but rappoe is best in the field, and ratoons much better.
2552. Have you ever grown cheribon here? Yes.
2553. You have mentioned lahina cane, does it suit this soil? Up to the present year it always gave a very poor percentage of crystallised sugar, but last year—on account of the drought which is a new thing here—the return was very good.
2554. Is not that one of the varieties of cane that was distributed by the Government a few years ago? I do not know. We got it ourselves from Hambleton.
2555. Have you any creole cane? No; but I think it is the same as the meera.
2556. Do you know that it was distributed by the Government? No.
2557. From your experience of the lahina and creole canes you do think that they are any better than the varieties in common use? No; I think rappoe is the best variety, so far.
2558. Have you had any experience of rust here? Yes; we have had it in the cane, but it did not do any serious damage.
2559. Is it noticeable in any particular variety? It appears in treboe, lillian green, and black Java.

2560. Do you trash your cane? We always try to trash every paddock once—twice, if possible, if we have sufficient labour. G. E. Adams.
2561. Do you believe that this is necessary? We have proved it by trashing only half a field, and letting the other half alone, and the part that was trashed grew within six weeks 6 inches more than the other on an average. 19 Jan., 1889.
2562. Have you tested it by an analysis of the juice? Yes; and trashed cane gives a higher percentage.
2563. Then your experience proves that it is profitable to trash? Certainly.
2564. How do you plant your cane? By digging a hole 20 inches long, 10 inches wide, and 8 inches deep.
2565. Are the grubs showing this season? I do not expect them to show before February or March to any extent. There are plenty in the ground. I have had to allow 25 acres of my best land to lie fallow, and I am trying to kill the grub that way.
2566. Do you find that cultivation kills the grub? So far it has not.
2567. You mentioned that you had some cane from Java. Have you got any from anywhere else? Yes. I got some from Homebush (Mackay), the Victoria (Ingham), Brisbane, and New South Wales. I got a shipload from New South Wales.
2568. Do those plants do well and thrive after bringing them here? Yes. I think a change of seed is necessary.
2569. You think it beneficial to change the seed? Yes. After five years it is better to change the seed as much as possible.
2570. Were any of these Java plants sent to any other people in the district? Yes; to Mourilyan.
2571. Do you know what they did with them there? They planted them in an isolated place and intend to grow them. I think it is a great risk to do so.
2572. Have you ever manured here? We have manured in the nursery only. It was an experiment.
2573. Have you had sufficient experience to tell us what is the best kind of manure? We tried six acres with lime, filter press cake, and superphosphate; but the filter press cake gave us the best return. That is the refuse from the filter press in the mill.
2574. Have you had any experience with artificial manures? The result in the nursery is, that superphosphate gives the best result.
2575. Superphosphate and lime mixed? Alone. We tried lime and ashes, and it gave a return of 12 tons to the acre; but the superphosphate gave a return of 50 tons to the acre.
2576. What was the gain in favour of the manured cane? Thirty-eight tons to the acre. You must remember that that was only just a few stools, and it may not be sufficient to rely on.
2577. Then up to the present you can give us no information as to the best kind of manure to use? No; our ground is all virgin soil.
2578. You said you were purchasers of cane? Yes.
2579. Do you lease your land? No; we would be glad to take more, a great deal more cane, at the price quoted—11s. a ton.
2580. *By Mr. King*: The price would vary with the density and the price of sugar? Yes.
2581. *By Mr. Conley*: Have you leased any land to growers? Yes; to Chinamen.
2582. No white farmers? No. The Chinamen have 500 acres. They planted 100 acres the first year, 200 the second year, and 200 afterwards.
2583. What rental do they pay for this land? No rental. It is a clearing lease.
2584. What do you pay them per ton for their cane? 9s. per ton, delivered on the trucks.
2585. This price of 9s. per ton is fixed at that on account of their getting the land free? Yes; certainly.
2586. Would you lease the land to white farmers if they would plant sugar on it? In all my communications with the general manager on the subject, he says he is only too willing to start such an idea, provided the men could see their way to work it.
2587. Has it been made generally known to farmers, that you are prepared to lease them land and buy their cane? Yes; and I have the conditions that I showed to the farmers.
2588. What number of draught horses have you here? Forty-two draught horses and twelve hacks.
2589. How many bullocks? Seventeen working bullocks.
2590. Is most of your haulage work done by trams? Yes; nearly all.
2591. How many miles of tram have you, portable and permanent? When it is all completed there will be thirteen miles of permanent line, and about four miles of portable. There are more portable rails coming, but they are not here yet.
2592. What machine power have you? Two locomotives; and another one coming out. Horses work the portable lines.
2593. Have you double crushing in your mill? Yes; two sets of rollers, each double crushing; two mills.
2594. Do you macerate the cane? Yes; largely.
2595. Is your machinery of the very best description known in the manufacture of sugar? Yes; I believe it is. There is the triple effect and the vacuum pan.
2596. Do you try to avoid all waste? Certainly. Our chemists are employed to take an analysis of the cane as it comes into the mill, and at the end of the season we can see how much sugar we ought to have got, and how much we actually obtained.
2597. Is this analysis continually being taken? Yes; it is going on throughout the whole of the season. It is not an experiment, but continuous work.
2598. What is the average amount of juice in the cane? 2·30 gallons of juice to the ton of cane.
2599. What percentage of water is added to this? I am not able to tell you. Mr. Scott will be able to give you the information.
2600. I want to know if your kanakas are easily managed? Yes; they are.
2601. Do they create any trouble? Have you had any punished? Several; but it was all on account of the frog. If it were not for the frog they would be the most tractable class of men you could have.
2602. Do you take steps to prosecute those persons who supply frog to the men? Yes; and I have obtained convictions against them.
2603. Has that a deterrent effect? It is not nearly so bad as it used to be.

- G. E. Adams
19 Jan., 1889.
2604. Do these labourers agree with the other labourers on the plantation? Yes; there is very rarely any trouble.
2605. Do the natives of the different islands agree amongst themselves? There are no tribal fights, or at least very rarely, and they are easily stepped.
2606. Have you any difficulty in obtaining South Sea Islanders? Can you obtain them easily? No indeed, we cannot.
2607. Can you make any suggestions by which they could be more easily obtained; of your own knowledge do you know of anything? I could not say from my own knowledge.
2608. What is the cost of passage money now? We employ our own ship, the "Nautilus."
2609. Is your ship continually running? Yes; it has been running now three voyages.
2610. Could you tell us about the cost per head to the plantation? Between £20 and £22.
2611. Does that include the capitation fee paid to the Government? No.
2612. Are you full handed, or could you give employment to more men? We want another 150 men.
2613. Have you made any application for them? The "Nautilus" has just gone for boys for this plantation.
2614. Do you employ a medical attendant on this plantation? Yes, there is an hospital attendant. The medical man comes up once a week and examines the boys.
2615. Besides this do you subscribe to the hospital, and pay the usual fees to it? Yes. In addition we pay the medical man who comes here 50 guineas a year.
2616. Have you ever irrigated here? No.
2617. Do you believe that it would be beneficial? Yes; but this is the first year that we have had anything like a drought.
2618. Do you know if it is the intention of the Company to go in for irrigation? No; they have not told me. It would be very easy to irrigate on account of the land all falling back from the river.
2619. Have you a ready sale for sugar? We do not sell any; we ship it away direct to the refinery.
2620. Do you make a low class sugar? Yes.
2621. Have you good means of transporting your sugar? We do it by sailing vessels—sometimes, steamers.
2622. Do you keep any record of the readings of the thermometer on the estate? Yes.
2623. Can you supply us with a copy for the last few years? Yes.
2624. And also the rainfall? - Yes.
2625. *By Mr. King*: What is the average wages of European labourers in this district who are not employed in the sugar industry—who are employed out of doors, but not employed by yourself? From about 25s. to 30s. a week and rations, and they have to live in tents.
2626. What wages does the Divisional Board pay? They pay 10d. an hour, or about 8s. a day, and the labourers find themselves.
2627. Can you get plenty of labour at the wages you offer? We had some trouble during the crushing season; but I do not think it would be the same now. I have a great many inquiries for employment now.
2628. What is the amount of rates you pay annually to the Divisional Board here? About £280.
2629. *By the Chairman*: Where was the machinery now in the mill manufactured? In England and Scotland.
2630. Is none of it colonial made? No, I am happy to say; at least I do not think any of it is.
2631. Are any kanakas employed in the mill work? No; only whites. Sometimes the white men fall ill and I have to get kanakas to fill their places.
2632. Can you tell us what is about the average annual cost of the over-hauling of and repairs to the machinery before you commence in the season? Since we have been here we have made so many additions from year to year that I could not give you any stated amount. The plantation has only been working three years.
2633. Approximately? I could give you a rough idea; but I would prefer the general manager to give you the answer on that point.
2634. Do you always keep in the establishment a regular staff of engineers and fitters? Yes; all the year round.
2635. Have you ever attempted to employ any of the aboriginals of the colony on your plantation? Yes.
2636. Many? Yes.
2637. Has the employment of aboriginals on the plantation been a success? Decidedly not. We employ them out of charity. If we employ a man he generally brings all his relations with him.
2638. Then you do not think that their labour would be suitable for plantation work? To a very small degree. They are decidedly most unsatisfactory labour.
2639. Now, you are aware that the special object of this Commission is to obtain suggestions from those engaged in the sugar industry as to how it can be improved in view of its present depressed state. Have you any suggestions to offer whereby the sugar industry can be improved at the present time? I think the first question of all is the settlement finally of the labour question. That is the first thing. The second is some way in which we could meet those sugar bounties, by having a tax placed on other sugars coming into this country.
2640. *By Mr. King*: But no sugar comes into the colony at present? Then we should have assistance by putting on a bounty here.
2641. *By the Chairman*: When you say "final settlement of the labour question," what labour do you refer to? I refer to coloured labour, as white labour would not do.
2642. What would you consider the final settlement of the labour question? That some sort of labour should be given us for use in field work, that we could depend on for years to come. Any extension definitely fixed would only be prolonging the evil day. If the labour question was settled we could then see our way; but at present everybody must be frightened at the results likely to come about.
2643. You are aware that according to the law the introduction of kanakas ceases at the end of 1890? Yes.
2644. What effect is that likely to have on the sugar industry? If I had a plantation of my own I would most decidedly look on it that I should have to expect to shut up if I was prevented from employing kanakas.
2645. Then if the Act is carried out as it is now on the statute books it will have the effect of closing the plantations? Yes; a very large number.

2646. Then,

2646. Then, from your knowledge and experience in the northern district, you are of opinion that the sugar industry could not be carried on without coloured labour? Certainly not.
2647. And that it should take the form of kanaka labour? I did not say kanaka, but the kanaka is the most suitable labour that we have. We have not tried the Javanese. I think the Chinese are not suitable.
2648. Do you think that the present price of sugar would permit you to employ Europeans? No; I am sure it would not.
2649. Not if they could be obtained at 15s. a week and their board, as at Townsville at present? No; because they can't stand the heat, and when you refer to 15s. a week, that is for new chums who can't stand the climate. They do in the mill, but nowhere else.
2650. *By Mr. King*: Will a new chum do as much work in the field as a kanaka? No; he is not able to do so. They get diarrhoea and dysentery.
2651. *By the Chairman*: Do you think that an alteration might be made in their hours of labour? Supposing that Europeans went to work at 5 o'clock in the morning and worked up to 11 o'clock, and then discontinued in the heat of the day, and finished their work in the cool part of the evening, would that be any advantage? We have tried that to a certain extent before now. At the same time I may mention a case that came before the Divisional Board yesterday. A contractor wrote to say that he would have to suspend work as the men he employed said they could not stand the heat.
2652. Then, the Divisional Board men refused to work? Yes; they refused to work until the weather became cooler.
2653. What suggestions would you propose with regard to the labour question? You have not told us distinctly what you mean. The Act expires at the end of 1890, and what would you suggest as an alternative? That is what we are desirous of ascertaining. As long as we are allowed to use the kanaka or suitable labour that can be got with certainty, I contend that the question is settled as far as we are concerned, and it would enable us to carry on, and all the sugar estates would be worked properly.
2654. Are your company aware that at the end of 1890 the importation of Polynesian labour ceases? Yes.
2655. Then do you know if the company are making any arrangements as to labour in view of the Act being carried into effect? I would rather not speak on that point; the general manager will tell you.
2656. *By Mr. Cowley*: What do you generally pay new chums here? 15s. a week. But we have different rates for different work about the mill, and if a man shows himself anxious and pushing, he gets up higher in the department and gets better wages.
2657. Then you do your utmost to encourage them to remain with you in the mill? Yes.
2658. Do you give them bonuses if they remain during the season? Yes. Any man who gets under 25s. a week wages, gets 2s. 6d. a week bonus if he remains during the season.
2659. Do you find new chum labour satisfactory. Do you find that they fulfil their agreements? It is pretty satisfactory in the mill, no where else. In all batches of new chums we get a certain number of black sheep, but after they have been culled out, the remainder work satisfactorily. We have several who have been through the season with us.
2660. Do you think that the right class of men are being brought to the country for agricultural pursuits? Yes, I am well satisfied with those I have got, taking them all round.
2661. As agricultural labourers or as mill men? As mill men.
2662. I mean agriculturists. Do ploughmen or agricultural labourers come out? As far as my ploughing goes it is so limited that I can hardly speak on this subject. I have only two or three ploughs and horses at work and in nearly all cases they are worked by white men, who are new chums, and they are the best to work at that.
2663. I suppose that the closing of this mill would be disastrous to the district? There is nothing else for Geraldton to depend on.
2664. Is there any other industry of importance being carried on here? No.
2665. Do you do much work by contract? Yes; I have plenty of white men who take contracts, and also several Chinese contractors.
2666. *By the Chairman*: When you say that kanakas are necessary for the sugar industry, you refer exclusively to field work? Certainly.
2667. Not to mill work? No, we have worked our mill with white men.
2668. Then from your experience in the northern districts you are of opinion that white men would not be able to do field work, where the land is timbered and the stumps are on it, and when only the hoe is used? Most decidedly.
2669. And the Europeans you have already had with you refused to work in the cane field? Yes.
2670. *By Mr. Cowley*: As a matter of fact the Europeans will not hoe under any condition? No; I have never known them to use the hoe.
2671. If you could get kanakas at a cheaper rate than at present, would you be prepared to pay them more than £6 a year, which is the wages under the Act? Of course that cuts both ways. I think I would. I would like to say, before closing my evidence, that this company in all their mills, have analytical chemists who see the loss that takes place, and check the amount of sugar that comes into the mill in the cane and the amount of sugar that is obtained from it. Those gentlemen are kept all the year round. They analyse the cane during the season, and tell us which is the best cane to grow, and which is the best season of the year to cut it.
2672. *By Mr. King*: Do they also analyse the soil? Yes; a comparison is made every year of the whole of our works.

WILLIAM HYDE TRUSS examined:

2673. *By the Chairman*: What are you? The hospital attendant.
2674. Have you had any experience on the estate as a ganger? Yes.
2675. How long were you a ganger? About twelve months.
2676. Were you in the field continuously during that time? Every day.
2677. How many men had you charge of? I had no men; I had charge of the women.
2678. How did they carry on their work in the field? They did the usual work—weeding.
2679. Did they do it without difficulty? Yes; easily.
2680. Were they well able to stand the climate? Well able.

2681. Did

W. H. Truss.

19 Jan., 1889.

W. H. Truss. 2381. Did they suffer in health? No.

2382. Did you do any work yourself when you were with them? No.

19 Jan., 1889. 2383. Do you think you could have done it? I could have done it, I dare say.

2384. What work were they doing? Weeding and trashing.

2385. Do you think that is work that white men could do? No; not weeding.

2386. Do you think a white man could not do that? No.

2387. Have you ever seen any white men doing work in the cane field? No; not trashing.

2388. Have you seen them weeding? No; I have not.

2389. As hospital attendant, can you state what diseases the kanakas principally suffer from? Dysentery, fever, pneumonia, and diarrhoea.

2390. Were the cases numerous? No. During the past twenty months we have been very free from almost all diseases.

2391. When a kanaka comes to you and complains of illness, do you examine and prescribe for him yourself? Yes; if he is very ill or has met with a bad accident, he is sent into the Geraldton hospital.

2392. How often does the medical man from Geraldton visit the plantation? Once a week, oftener if necessary.

2393. Does he visit the islanders generally or only those in the hospital? Those only in the hospital who are sick.

2394. Is there any specified time for the sick men to call at the hospital or do they come at any time of the day? They come the first thing in the morning.

2395. Do you decide whether a boy is unfitted for work or do you leave that to the manager. It is left to me.

2396. How does the kanaka's health compare with the health of Europeans? Very well. There are a great many more kanakas than Europeans on the plantation. The average number of boys sick is about six; sometimes we have twenty or thirty.

2397. What is the proportion of deaths? Last year the total number of deaths on the plantation amongst the boys was sixteen, of these fourteen died at Geraldton.

2398. Can you state from memory what was the principal disease they suffered from, which resulted in death? Pneumonia.

2399. Sixteen deaths out of the total number of men employed? Yes; out of 400 or 500.

2400. Have many of the women had children during the time you were on the plantation with them? About six or seven, I think.

2401. How long do they abstain from work on those occasions? That is left almost entirely to themselves. About a fortnight, if they feel inclined to turn out. We never hurry them.

2402. What hours do they work? Ten hours a day.

2403. Can you give the hours? From half-past six till half-past five, with an hour allowed for dinner.

2404. Do they ever complain of the length of their hours? No.

2405. Do they show any unwillingness to go to their work? No, none whatever.

2406. Are they easily managed? They give no trouble whatever.

2407. *By Mr. King:* How many kanakas had you under you when you were a ganger? Sixteen women at a time. There are a great many more now.

2408. Do you think you could have taken the hoe in your hand and done the same work that they did? I would not like to have to.

2408a. Would you be willing to take 25s. or 30s. a week to do the work? No.

2409. *By Mr. Cowley:* Is your hospital well supplied with medical requirements? Yes. Anything I require I can get from Mr. Adams. I have full power to give anything that in my judgment I consider necessary.

PATRICK MALONEY examined:

P. Maloney. 2710. *By the Chairman:* What are you? A ganger.

2711. How long have you been on this plantation? Eight months.

2712. And have you been engaged as a ganger on the plantation during that time? Yes.

2713. How many men have you in a gang? Thirty-eight.

2714. What work were they employed in? Hoeing and cutting cane at the time of crushing.

2715. Did you work with them? No.

2716. You simply gauged their labour and looked after them? Yes.

2717. What time did you go out in the morning with them? I am supposed to leave the house at 6 o'clock.

2718. To what time do you work in the evening? Till 5 o'clock.

2719. Is there any allotted task given them, or do they work on and do as much as they can? They have to do a fair amount of work. In cutting and trashing we set them a task.

2720. But in weeding they are not tasked? No.

2721. In cutting and trashing is the task set a heavy one? No, it is not excessive; they can get done about 3 o'clock.

2722. And on Saturdays how do you deal with them? They stop at half-past three.

2723. Are they called on to do any extra work on account of this early stoppage of work? No.

2724. How do they work? Is their work done cheerfully? Yes.

2725. Have you any trouble with them? None.

2726. Supposing a boy becomes unwell in the field, what do you do with him? I send him to the hospital.

2727. Have you seen any Europeans engaged in field work? No; excepting driving horses and ploughing. They do not work in the cane.

2728. Would you, as a ganger, like to do the same kind of work as the kanakas? No, not on any account.

2729. Why? Because it is too hot.

2730. But supposing you were paid 30s. a week and your board for doing it? I would do some part of it, but not the whole of the work that they do.

2731. How long have you been living in the northern district? Seven years.

2732. And

2732. And you have not undertaken any work of the kind yourself? No, none.

2733. Would you do so? I do not think I would.

2734. Have you ever been put to the test? No, never.

2735. Have you always found abundance of other employment? Yes.

2736. Do you know of your own knowledge that any of your countrymen have refused to do work in the cane field? No, not that I ever saw; I never saw them asked to do the same work, only part of it.

2737. *By Mr. King:* What wages would you take to do trashing and weeding, the same as the kanakas? It would be a large amount; I should not like to do it for a good deal. If I tried, I do not think I would be able to stand the work as well as a kanaka.

2738. If it was the only work offered to you, would you take it or hump your drum? I would hump my drum first.

2739. *By Mr. Cowley:* Do the kanakas prefer the task to ordinary day work? It all depends. If you task them heavily, they prefer usual day work.

2740. In the event of their not finishing the task before knocking off time, what happens? They finish it next morning. They leave off at the same hour as if they were doing day work.

2741. If they finish their task before knocking off time, what happens? They are allowed to go home.

2742. Do they often finish before their time? Not very often.

2743. What work have you been engaged in during the seven years you have been in the colony? Different kinds of work. At first driving a team of horses in the Mackay district. I was eighteen months at that; it was my first job. I then got a mob of boys on the same plantation. Then for two years I was employed platelaying on the railway, and the remainder of the time I have been on this plantation.

2744. *By the Chairman:* Do you think that platelaying on the railway is as hard work as hoeing in the cane field? You are better paid for it.

MONDAY, 21 JANUARY, 1889.

JOHNSTONE RIVER DISTRICT.

(At Mourilyan.)

~ PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

ROBERT RUSSELL SMELLIE examined:

2745. *By the Chairman:* Are you one of the partners of the Mourilyan Sugar Company? Yes.

2746. Will you be kind enough to tell us what experience you have had in the cultivation of sugar or any other tropical produce on this plantation? Yes; seven years—since the end of 1881.

2747. And what has been the result of your experience during that time? In what respect?

2748. With regard to the success of the cultivation of sugar? As far as the profit has been concerned it has been almost *nil*. All the profit we have made on the plantation has been expended in further improvements, every sixpence of it; the proprietors have not withdrawn one shilling from the plantation for salary or anything else; they have lived on their means, and all the profits derived from the plantation, every shilling, has been expended on the property.

2749. What is the total area of the estate? We have 5,000 acres altogether.

2750. How much is under cultivation? I think we have 1,200 acres cleared, and 750 acres under cultivation; this year 850 acres under cultivation.

2751. All under cane? Under cane.

2752. How much sugar do you make in the course of a year? In 1886 over 2,000 tons. Last year we made about half, and this year about half, in consequence of the drought. The drought has continued now for two years, and there is every prospect of a smaller crop this year, through the effects of the drought last year.

2753. How much molasses do you have? I can scarcely tell you. This year we have not yet dried off our fourth sugar; but I can give you an approximate idea. Between 3,000 and 4,000 gallons we have made this year. We have only run off 2,000 gallons this year, and we have only fourth tanks left now.

2754. What do you do with it? Run it into the river.

2755. What amount of capital is invested in the estate? Over £120,000 has been expended.

2756. Does the produce of the plantation pay the interest on the plantation as well as its working expenses? No. In 1886 it did, and gave a considerable surplus.

2757. But not in 1887 and 1888? No.

2758. That was due to the drought? Yes.

2759. And the low price of sugar? I am coming to that. In 1886 we had a surplus, and if we had obtained the same price for sugar in 1886 that we did in 1884, when we started, our gross return would have been £20,000 more for the crop. Sugar has fallen in price since 1884 50 per cent., so anyone can form an opinion about the results of an industry when you are so much short in price alone.

2760. Can you tell us what your annual working expenditure is? The working expenditure, I think, costs about £1000 a month. In 1886 it cost us £24,000 a year. We had a tremendous crop to take off, and we had to engage a large number of Chinamen by contract to cut cane and load it for the mill. All that is included in the £24,000. But now it takes from £1000 to £1200 a month to work the plantation.

2761. What labour do you employ on your plantation? Just now Javanese and kanakas.

2762. Can

P. Maloney.

19 Jan., 1889.

R. R. Smellie.

21 Jan., 1889.

- R. R. Smellie. 2762. Can you tell us the number of Javanese, kanakas, Chinamen, and Europeans that you have? In coloured labour we have 172 just now.
- 21 Jan., 1889. 2763. Particularise the exact numbers? Kanakas, 14.
2764. The number of Javanese? 157 Javanese.
2765. The number of Chinese employed? None.
2766. The number of Europeans? There are five Europeans employed here now, not including the manager.
2767. How many Europeans do you employ during crushing time? They average from 20 to 25.
2768. What is the average wage you pay to kanakas? We are paying kanakas now from £12 to £15 a year.
2769. What wages do you pay the Javanese? £18 a year, or 27s. a month, for those introduced to the colony, and we have others to whom we pay from £2 to £2 5s. a month, and we find them in board as well as medical comforts and attendance.
2770. What wages do you pay to Europeans on an average? About £100 a year, and we board them all. We board everybody on the plantation.
2771. Speaking from your own experience, what description of labour do you find most suitable for field work? We find kanakas and Javanese very good for work of that sort. Javanese are particularly handy with the hoe. They are Sourabaya boys. They are better than the kanaka boys with the hoe, and make a nice clean tidy job.
2772. Have you ever employed Europeans in field work? In 1885 when the House passed a Bill to enable employers to introduce labour from the Continent of Europe, within twenty-four hours after it became law I sent an order home to our agent in London to send us out forty men.
2773. What was the result? In the first place he went over to the Continent, and there found that the Continental powers would not permit this Bill to be put into operation; and within, I suppose, about three months I informed the Government of this fact, and they would scarcely believe it, until Sir Samuel Walker Griffith wired home to the Agent-General to go over personally and make inquiries. We could have evaded the law by bringing the men to London to engage, but when their own Government would not allow it in their own country, it was not our place to fight the laws of those countries.
2774. Then, practically, your application ended in nothing? It practically resulted in nothing on the Continent. Afterwards we sent a similar order to Mr. Hamilton, our agent in London, to send us out forty labourers from England, under engagement for two years, at £30 for the first year and £40 for the second year, and if they worked well the company would not stick to the £30 for the first year, but give them £40 for both years. I think we succeeded in getting thirty to come out. They came out here and at once created as many difficulties as they could. We put them to the easiest work—work in the shade. They were feeding the cane carrier, and in a very short time they found that if they put too much cane on the carrier, it would clog the mill and stop operations, and that if they put too little on the carrier it made a bad crushing, and the megass was too moist and damped down the fires, and the mill had to be stopped for half an hour to get steam up again. They appeared to come out here with not the slightest intention of working, and the manager drew them all up outside the mill one day and said, "Those who wish to work stand to that side, and those who do not wish to work stand there." And of the lot only one man stood aside as being prepared to work; he was prepared to work and had come out here to work. We cancelled the agreements of the rest. That man who decided to work is still here.
1775. *By Mr. King:* What wages does he get? £78 a year; he is a good steady man. He has only been here two years. I intended to teach these men every branch of mill work. I had an idea that we could work the plantation with white labour; this was the start of it, and this is how we were treated.
2776. *By the Chairman:* Have you ever employed in field work men who have been in the colony a long time? No; we never could find any men to engage in field work with the hoe or to do chipping and trashing or any work in the cane or field except driving horses; that is the only field work white men will engage in. They always said it was work for kanakas. In fact, on different occasions men have asked me if I thought they were kanakas.
2777. How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each blackfellow employed? I should say about four acres to one man. When we get the plantation under plough we will be able to do it with less I dare say. With us up here we are obliged to keep a large staff the whole year that we do not actually require. If we could get labour for six months when we want it, we could do with a great deal fewer hands.
2778. How many acres have you under the plough? 179 acres under the plough.
2779. Do you think that Europeans could cultivate that part of it? They could do the ploughing and scarifying, but you would require black boys to chip between the rows of cane; that is very trying work.
2780. Then if I understand you rightly it was your intention to work this plantation with white labour if you could have got it? That was our intention. I tried to get men out, and got thirty to come here at from £30 to £40 a year, a salary we could afford to pay them. But the new chums had not been here long before the white men in the district commenced to tell them that they had come out here to take the bread out of their mouths, and that they had been imposed upon. This made them discontented, and a discontented man is a worthless man.
2781. Is that the way the thirty hands engaged by Mr. Hamilton in London were made discontented? We think so.
2782. Then it was not because they could not do the work; but because they thought they were not getting sufficient wages? That was it. They would not work for less than the ruling wages of the colony, and there is no sugar plantation in the colony that can pay the ruling wages of the colony and grow sugar at a profit. I have no doubt myself that sugar can be grown by white labour up to a certain state. But that is not the question to be solved. The question to be solved is whether it can be grown at a profit. If it cannot be grown profitably and to compete with the world it must cease to exist. That is my thorough conviction.
2783. Do the kanakas and Javanese employed in the fields suffer in health at all? They do not as a rule. We have very healthy boys.
2784. Does the field work affect the health of the Europeans when engaged on it? I do not know, because we have never tried any in the field.

2785. Did

2785. Did it affect the thirty you had from home? They were never in the field, they were under a shed in the shade. R. R. Smellie.
21 Jan., 1889.
2786. Then you never had any Europeans in field work? No, never. We put them on the easiest work we could till they became acclimatised.
2787. Have you one or two crushing mills in the mill? Two.
2788. Is your machinery English or colonial? It was manufactured by Mirrelees, Tait, and Watson, of Glasgow. It is one of the most complete mills in Queensland for the production of white sugar.
2789. Do you have an annual overhaul? Yes.
2790. Do you do your own repairs? Yes.
2791. Are the Polynesians you employ time-expired boys? A lot of them are. These boys whom we indentured, and who came to us after their time had expired, arranged to remain on. They came here for three years, then engaged for twelve months more, and after that for twelve months again.
2792. Are these boys occasionally visited by the Polynesian Inspector? Yes.
2793. And by the medical officer? Yes. We have a hospital of our own, but if any of the boys are seriously ill they are sent to Geraldton Polynesian Hospital.
2794. Were the Javanese indentured to you direct from Java? Yes.
2795. Have any of them completed their time? Yes. We sent away about sixty-five in October.
2796. And the rest? Their time has not yet expired. Some of the first batch re-engaged, and another batch will be ready in October to be sent home.
2797. Is it not part of the agreement with the Javanese Government that before they re-engage they must be consenting parties? No.
2798. Is it optional with the Javanese themselves? Yes. We can't engage them at all now in Java.
2799. Speaking from your experience of them, which do you think best in the field work, Javanese or kanakas? Javanese.
2800. Do they suffer in health in the field work? No, not any more than the kauakas.
2801. And they are treated in the same way as the South Sea Islanders? Just the same.
2802. *By Mr. King*: Has any of this land suffered from exhaustion at all? Do you think that the falling off in the production is attributable to exhaustion of soil? No. I can give you an analysis of the soil taken last year if you want it embodied in your report. We sent four different samples of our soil to Mr. Hays, in London, who is agricultural chemist for the Planters' Association. Three of the samples he mentioned as containing the highest fertility. I asked him when he thought manure would be required, if any manure was wanted, and what elements were wanting in the soil, and he said it would not want any manure for many years.
2803. Has the cane suffered from any blight, disease, or vermin of any kind? In 1886 we suffered from grub.
2804. Was that the cane grub? Yes, the cane grub. There is what is called the borer, which bores into the cane. This grub is different altogether. The cane grub comes into the stool.
2805. Have you not suffered from it since 1886? Slightly, but not so much. In fact, it disappeared altogether.
2806. Did you suffer to any great extent from it? Yes, a good deal. We only had about half the returns we had in the previous year. The cane grew luxuriantly up to a certain stage, and then the grub attacked them and growth ceased.
2807. Did you try any measure to stop the grub? We did.
2808. What did you do? I consider that the proper means for exterminating the grub is "elbow grease." We utilised our labour that year by stumping 179 acres and putting it under the plough.
2809. *By the Chairman*: Then practically cultivation will destroy it? Yes; we tried quick lime, but it did not kill the grub. A month or two ago I found that common salt killed it.
2810. *By Mr. King*: Since you ploughed the 179 acres, has the grub appeared in it? In this patch it has re-appeared to a certain extent.
2811. I understood you to say that this plantation paid the interest on the capital invested? No, not the interest on the capital. It did so in 1886. It paid about 5 per cent. then.
2812. Does the whole of the capital invested in this plantation belong to the proprietors? The larger portion of it does.
2813. If any considerable portion of the capital had been borrowed, would the plantation be able to pay interest on the borrowed money? Yes; it would pay the interest on the borrowed money; though the partners would get no interest on their capital.
2814. What did it cost for clearing the scrub—for clearing and burning it off? About £6 10s. That is the contract price for clearing and burning off only.
2815. How many years would it be after clearing and burning off before it could be stumped sufficiently to be worked by the plough? About seven years. It depends entirely on the timber. It would probably take longer at Goondi, as they have harder timber there. Our timber is softer than on the other side of the river.
2816. What would it cost to stump the scrub? We got offers for the stumping of the 179 acres from Chinamen. The lowest was £13 per acre.
2817. Has the 179 acres been under cultivation for some time? For three years under cultivation.
2818. During those three years would not the stumps have decayed to a certain extent? Yes.
2819. What do you estimate it would cost to stump the scrub after burning off and having a crop on? It would be, I think, fully £25 per acre for most of the land in the district. With our own labour it cost us £7.
2820. That is with black labour? Yes. That is the same land the Chinamen offered to stump for £13. We had one tender as high as £20. It all requires to be cleared for 12 or 14 inches under the surface.
2821. What does it cost you to get kanaka labour from the islands? The last we got cost us about £22 10s. We calculate that it costs us £25 to land them on the plantation.
2822. Does that include the capitation fee? No; the capitation fee is in addition.
2823. *By Mr. Conley*: You say it cost £6 10s. to clear and burn off? Yes.
2824. Would that leave the land fit for planting? Just ready for hoeing. The contract was £3 5s. for cutting down, and £3 5s. for drawing and burning.

2825. Have

- R. R. Smellie. 2825. Have you always employed an experienced manager here? Yes.
2826. In 1886, you say that you made 2,000 tons of sugar. Had you sufficient labour during that year to reap the crop and thoroughly attend to its cultivation? No; we had not.
- 21 Jan., 1889. 2827. Did the ratoon crop suffer much from neglect that year? It did.
2828. Then you had to neglect some of the cane, with the result that there was a smaller crop next year? Yes, I had.
2829. Do you think that the loss would have been greater if it had been a wet season instead of a dry season? No; it would not have been so much. The grub does more damage in dry weather than in wet weather. In fact the grub cannot live in wet soil.
2830. Is there any market at all for molasses? None that would pay.
2831. Have you tried distillation? No; we have not a sufficient quantity of molasses to keep the still going all the season. I believe it would pay if we had sufficient molasses to keep the still going all the year round.
2832. If the excise duty were removed would there be sufficient molasses in this district to keep one still going? Yes; I would be inclined to put up a still myself if the other mills would let me have their molasses. It is all a means of increasing revenue.
2833. Then, as a source of profit it is going to waste now? Yes; molasses contain 50 per cent. of sugar, and all that could be converted into spirit.
2834. Do you work the Javanese under one of their own mandors? Yes; under their own mandor in preference to our overseers. If they do anything wrong they are punished by their own code of laws, and the system of working under a mandor is in conformity with the laws of their own country.
2835. Do you think that this has been one cause of their success with you? I attribute it to a great extent to the mode of working them. Other people have a good deal of trouble with them, but we never have any trouble with them at all.
2836. Those white men that you imported from the old country you say you offered £30 and £40 a year. Does that include house and rations? No; rations and everything additional. Everybody on the plantation is rationed, and we find them in a house.
2837. Were any of them married men? No; all young men.
2838. Did the experiment result in loss to you? It resulted in our losing part of the next year's crop. The labour we brought out was specially to assist in 1886 with the heavy crop to be got in and with the field work, and they failed to carry out their agreement. It was an indirect loss.
2839. You say that you returned sixty-five Javanese some few months ago? Yes.
2840. Did any of the others re-engage elsewhere? Yes; one.
2841. What became of him? He went to Goondi, and is now at the Queensland. He wants to re-engage with me now and come back to the plantation. Those who re-engaged were paid the full wages for the next engagement. They were paid £2 5s. a month.
2842. Then of the shipment of Javanese all are accounted for, either having returned home or re-engaged? Yes.
2843. Are you under a bond to return all the Javanese to their own country if they wish to go? Yes; we are under a bond, through our agent in Batavia, to return them if they want to go. We are also bound by our own laws to send them home.
2844. What varieties of cane do you chiefly grow? Rose bamboo principally. Last year we tried a sort called Mauritius ginghan. It is a cane that grows rapidly and matures quickly. Meera is a good cane; it is very hard. We have twenty-two varieties of cane which we are testing as much as possible. A very fine cane we have is called striped Singapore. We planted out three acres of it for our nursery, but lost it on account of the drought. We have some old stools, and we are trying to get some plants out of it for first planting.
2845. What variety suits the plantation best? Rose bamboo is the best.
2846. Has any of your cane suffered from rust or any disease except the grub? No.
2847. Do you trash your cane regularly? Sometimes we do and sometimes we do not. Our manager does not believe in trashing; but I am a great believer in it, more especially in this district, which is a moist district, for the water settles at the bottom of the leaf and starts an eye in the cane.
2848. And why do you not always trash? Our manager believes in trashing at certain times. Sometimes he has not been able to trash at the time he thought it necessary for want of labour.
2849. Then, having tried both ways, have you come to the conclusion that it is wise and beneficial to trash? We have not come to any conclusion. Still we are going to trash this year, if possible.
2850. What is the average weight of your cane per acre? The average has been only 18 tons for the last two years.
2851. Are you purchasers of cane at all? No, not at all.
2852. Are you in a position to purchase it if you got it? Yes, we have a tramway laid all through the plantation.
2853. Have you made any efforts to get white men to cultivate cane? I have always induced our men to go and work portions of land. If they planted cane, we would buy it from them.
2854. Do you purchase any quantity? Yes, I could have purchased 10,000 tons this year, if I could have got it.
2855. Would you be prepared to lease your land to farmers to grow cane on it? As far as I am individually concerned, I would be. I would be glad to see the cultivation taken up by farmers, and leave the mill work and manufacturing to the company themselves. Still, those who leased the land would require to cultivate under instruction.
2856. How many miles of tram have you? Twelve miles of permanent line laid down and two and a-half miles of portable rails.
2857. Have you any motive power other than horses? Two locomotives.
2858. What fuel do you burn in your locomotives? Wood in the off season and coal in the crushing season.
2859. Do you burn wood in your furnaces? Yes, wood and megass.
2860. Then you burn no coal? No.
2861. You say that you have a double crushing plant in the mill. Do you macerate the cane? Yes, we do.

2862. Is your machinery of the best description all over the mill? The very highest class of machinery at the present day. R. R. Smellie.
2863. Do you do your best to prevent waste in every stage? Yes, I am in the mill myself from morning till night, and sometimes during the night. I do not think that any waste takes place that we can see. Our returns show whether there is much waste or not. 22 Jan., 1889.
2864. What is the average amount of sugar you extract from the cane? During the last season we got 1 ton of sugar from 9-30 or say 10 tons of cane.
2865. Have you a return for the whole of the year? I can scarcely give you that, because we have not manufactured all our sugar yet; the fourth class has still to be manufactured. The percentage of the different classes is 76-9 of total whites; 15-369 of our thirds, a yellow sugar; 7-732 of our fourth or lowest class sugar.
2866. Is that the percentage of the output? Yes; in October last year, in the last crushing, our return was 9816 tons of cane per ton of sugar. The average of the previous week was 9-957. That arises not from any waste, but from the different varieties of cane.
2867. What I wish to know is, if you have any means of ascertaining the amount of saccharine matter left in the megass? We can't tell exactly, but I should say about six per cent.
2868. You have extracted ten per cent., and you think that six per cent. is lost? Yes, I think so; six per cent. of the megass, equal to two per cent. of the cane. This last year, on account of the drought, the rind of the rose bamboo was very hard, and the density was very high, and it did not yield so much sugar as I expected, and I considered that the reason was because the rind and the fibre was so hard, and the high crystallisable sugar could not be extracted, though we used a lot of water in maceration.
2869. Can you suggest any means whereby the general waste can be overcome? The only means that I think would extract all the crystallisable sugar is by diffusion. We macerate to a very large extent between the two mills by boiling water. This we have found a great benefit.
2870. During your last crushing you say that a considerable amount of sugar was left in the megass. Could you not have extracted more by putting in additional water? The amount of water used is limited by the evaporating power we have.
2871. Does it pay to put in an excessive amount of water? No; not to put in too much.
2872. Have you had any experience at all in diffusion? Nothing further than from reading about it.
2873. Do you think it would pay in this district, or in Queensland generally, to adopt the diffusion process? I think that diffusion is the solution of extracting the greatest amount of sugar from the cane. In reading the reports from Louisiana, U.S., the greatest result that they got has been 222lbs. per ton of cane. I have got with crushing and maceration from 219lbs. to 223lbs. per ton of cane.
2874. Have you prepared a table showing the actual percentage of analysis? I have the analysis from Louisiana, U.S., but not of my own cane.
2875. Would fuel be a great item in the diffusion process? A tremendous item.
2876. Do you think it could be worked properly here with the fuel you have? I do not know.
2877. Then your plant at the present time is as complete as it can be? No more complete plant exists than the Mourilyan Sugar Company's plant. It has every appliance.
2878. Could you tell us the percentage of molasses you get per ton of sugar? I will be able to tell you exactly to a gallon as soon as we get our fourth sugar through.
2879. Can you tell us the percentage of last year? No; we did not keep it. I can make up the calculation, and tell you to within a very few gallons.
2880. Have the South Sea Islanders you have always been easily managed? We have never had any trouble with them at all.
2881. Have you had any trouble with the Javanese? We have never had any trouble with any of our labourers.
2882. Are the Javanese addicted to drunkenness? No; quite the reverse.
2883. Have you had any experience with aborigines? Yes; we have about twenty working now, and a lot have just gone into the scrub. We have sometimes seventy or eighty of them.
2884. Do you find them profitable labour? Yes; sometimes. In burning off trees, or anything like that, they are useful. They might come and work one day, and stop away two or three days. They come and go just as they like. These who come, we feed and clothe. Those who do not come and work, we do not give any food to. They come and work for a week or two, and then go away. It is not reliable labour for a plantation.
2885. Are you full handed on the plantation? No.
2886. Are you making any provision to get any other class of labour? Yes; Javanese, or kanakas, or Japanese. The Japanese are going in large numbers, at their own expense, from Japan to Honolulu.
2887. Then the work outside is suffering at present from want of labour? Not particularly just now.
2888. If you had additional labour would you extend your operations? Yes; my idea is to stump next. There are 100 acres of land that we planted in July in which the plants are not doing well at all on account of the drought. We are just considering whether we shall stump that land this season, and put it under the plough or clear and chip it, and burn off and replant with the hoe.
2889. Have you experienced any difficulty in getting kanakas here? We have not imported any kanakas for some years; the last we got was four years ago. We abandoned the idea of kanakas when we saw that the feeling of the country was against them, and we wished in 1886 to get Europeans to take their places, but we got a sickener of it.
2890. Have you attempted irrigation? No; never.
2891. Have you any intention of trying? In a district like this we did not think we would ever suffer from drought; it has never visited the district before. There has always been a large supply of rain.
2892. Amongst the varieties of plants you have, have you any from Java? Yes; I have specimens from Borneo.
2893. Are they healthy plants, or do they suffer from disease? No disease; nothing whatever. We have had communications from Mr Knox, in Sydney, asking us to have them destroyed; but the reason Dr. Kottmann gives, as published in the *Courier*, are strong reasons why they ought not to be destroyed. I know a lot about the serah disease. I instructed an expert to get this Borneo cane from North Borneo direct, as there are plantations formed in Java principally for supplying growers with cane tops for planting

R. R. Smellie planting. This cane is estimated to contain 22·6 per cent. of crystallisable sugar. I say that this is one of the solutions of the Queensland sugar industry—to introduce the very highest class of cane from all parts of the world. Those canes were selected from a plantation in Java which Dr. Kottmann himself acknowledges is entirely free from seroh disease, and is a long distance from those canes that are afflicted with the disease. Those canes have been yielding for some years up to six tons of crystallised sugar per acre.

2894. Are these analyses to be relied on? Yes; I think so. It is a wonderful cane if suitable for this climate.

2895. Then up to the present your specimens of this cane are entirely free from disease? Yes; I will show you the cane.

2896. *By the Chairman*: Then you do not intend to destroy the cane as Dr. Kottmann says you should? No; they are isolated and entirely under my eye.

2897. Dr. Kottmann says it is an infectious disease? But why should good cane coming from a district not infected at all be the means of introducing the disease. If the disease had been even within a few miles of where I got the cane from I would have destroyed them at once. I say that Dr. Kottmann has actually given us more reasons why Mr. Knox should not have got into a panic and destroyed his plants, which he has done. He would not suffer from the disease, if there was any, more than I would, and I am as much interested in keeping out the disease as he is. There is no indication of even the seroh disease or any other disease in the cane. The disease turns the cane into blady grass, which it was originally.

2898. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you ever obtained cane from any other source? We purchased a number of varieties last year from Mackay, some of which showed signs of the borer, and instead of planting them we burnt them. The others we planted, and I can show them to you.

2899. Contrasting them with your own plants, are they better and stronger than your own cane? Our own rose bamboo cane are the best plants.

2900. Are you aware that some years ago the Government distributed plants of the Lahina and Creole varieties? Yes; and I have some now. The Creole is just the same as the meera, at least, we believe so.

2901. Did the Lahina turn out anything extraordinary? We have not had it crushed. It is still in the nursery. It is a very good cane.

2902. Do you intend to propagate from it? Yes; if it stands the climate. Our present manager says it matures too soon and gets hard. I said to him that was one reason why we should plant it as we could crush it the earliest.

2903. Is there any other crop besides sugar that you think it would pay to grow by white labour in the district? No; they would have to be assisted by coloured labour; it could not be cultivated entirely by white labour.

2904. There is a vast amount of magnificent land here still unselected. Could any crops that you know of be grown in the district? Coffee grows well, but it requires more labour than sugar. Fruit grows well, but I do not think there is very much profit in it, because there is no market. I would guarantee to grow more bananas than would supply the whole of Australia. There is really no market. There is a great cry about going in for fruit both here and elsewhere.

2905. Do you believe that it could be done solely by white labour? Yes; I believe it could if the land could be cultivated with the plough and harrow. The principal part of the expense is after the fruit has matured.

2906. *By the Chairman*: Have you ever grown any fruit yourself on this plantation? No; only bananas for the boys.

2907. Do you keep a record of the rainfall and the temperature here? Yes.

2908. What is the average rainfall per year? Last year (1887) for the last nine months it was ninety-six inches.

2909. What time of the day do you take the temperature? We do not take it now as our glass is broken.

2910. Then you do not know what the average heat is? No.

2911. Is the heat such that a white man could work in it? No; not during the summer—at least, I would not like to do so.

2912. You would not like to put a white man to work in the heat you have here? No; not during these scorching days. They could stand it well enough in winter.

2913. Then in the winter months you think they could do the work? Yes.

2914. Then what in your opinion is the cause of the depressed condition of the sugar industry at the present time? The first cause is the low price of sugar caused by over production, and that over production is stimulated by the bounties to beetroot sugar.

2915. Is there no other local cause? One cause of the depression in the sugar industry in Queensland is the uncertainty of labour. I believe that is one of the great causes. There is no man, with capital, either in Queensland or out of it, who will embark in an industry when he is limited to five years or three years for a supply of the labour which he thinks necessary to carry on his operations. There are improvements that could be made to our mill that would save thousands of pounds, but we are afraid to lay out sixpence on them, because we believe that if coloured labour is cut off you also cut off the industry. That is our opinion.

2916. Then what remedy would you suggest in order to improve the condition of the industry at the present time? That is a difficult question to answer.

2917. Still as you are engaged in this particular industry yourself, and have now told us what are, in your opinion, the causes of the depression, we would like to know from you what in your opinion should be the remedies that should be tried to make an improvement in the industry and prevent it from collapsing? We must have labour, not bound to a certain place, and it must be of a reliable nature. We must have labour, not bound to a certain place and it must be of a reliable nature. We must have it without being interfered with or restricted by the Government. I will point out to you some of the restrictions that exist in regard to the kanaka labour. The kanaka is bound to do certain work in the field. He can bring the cane up to the sugar mill, but there he must leave it. A European labourer must take charge of it while it passes through the mill and until it is manufactured into sugar. The kanaka can then be brought to the sugar room and fill the bags with sugar, and put them on the truck. He can even take the

the trucks down to the wharf, to be put on board the steamer. There his duties cease. We are compelled by Act of Parliament to employ a white man to put them on board the steamer. It is restrictions of that sort that strangle the industry. Again, you are prohibited from putting the black girls who are 21 Jan., 1889, employed here to do house-work. Those petty obstructions strangle the industry and are useless.

2918. I understood you to say just now that in the mill Europeans could very well be employed? Yes; very well in the shade.

2919. Is it your opinion that you ought to be allowed to employ kanakas in the mill as well? I do not care whether they are employed in the mill work or not; we do not think that there should be any restriction, that a kanaka should only be allowed to bring up the cane to be crushed. It is done everywhere in Queensland except in this district. This is the only district that has adhered pretty strictly to the Act.

2920. *By Mr. King*: You would not put on kanakas to do any skilled work—to look after engines and sugar boiling? No; nothing like that.

2921. *By the Chairman*: Then if the labour question was settled in some way, you would proceed with the necessary improvements to your mill? Yes.

2922. And would you extend your operations generally? We would extend them as far as our machinery would allow us, as far as our mill could take it.

2923. Which is? Over 2,000 tons of sugar a year. My opinion is that a great many people in the colony do not know much about the industry, and they speak about small mills and small plantations. Now a plantation is just the same as any other commercial industry. A small mill will not pay. As an illustration, take this mill. It can produce 15 tons of sugar per diem. I could put up another mill and we could produce 30 tons a day, and with no more expense than the product of the one mill. We can boil a pan of sugar, and it takes us to boil a pan of 5 tons just the same time as it does to boil one of 20 tons. I cannot put it plainer than that. That is when you will see the sugar industry flourish in Queensland, when a number of small plantations join together and amalgamate. They are doing so in Honolulu. I see that five have just amalgamated there under the one management.

2924. You have had experience before you went into the sugar industry in employing a large number of men? Yes; all my life.

2925. You were at one time one of the largest employers of white labour about Brisbane? Yes; I was.

2926. And your sympathies would go in the direction of employing entirely white labour if you could get it in sufficient quantities? Yes.

2927. Then your opinion is that at the present price of sugar you could not afford to pay Europeans 30s. a week? No; I would never think of doing so.

2928. Do the Europeans on this plantation show any animosity to the employment of kanakas? I do not think so; they are all very friendly, the kanakas and the whites.

2929. That is as long as the kanakas are employed in field work? Yes. I never heard any complaints from the whites as to the kanakas. The white people have all come to the conclusion in this district that the kanakas are a necessity.

2930. Supposing that the restrictions you mentioned were withdrawn, and the kanakas were allowed to be employed indiscriminately on the plantations, do you think that the white people would resent it? I do not think they would be employed indiscriminately on the plantations any more than at present. I am speaking for myself.

2931. You have told us that here are some planters in other parts who do not adhere so closely to the law as you do? Not in this district, but in other parts of the colony.

2932. But would not these men who do not now observe the law, supposing the restrictions were removed, be inclined to carry it a little further? They might.

2933. *By Mr. Cowley*: Would you entrust your valuable machinery to a South Sea Islander, even if you could? No; we have never done so.

2934. Do you think that a reciprocity treaty with the southern colonies would benefit the sugar planter at present? Yes; if it could be made advantageous to both colonies, I think it would.

2935. *By Mr. King*: If Queensland sugar could be admitted free into the other colonies, would that benefit the sugar planter? It would materially. That is one of the reasons why the plantations of New South Wales can afford to have white labour on their plantations, because they are protected to the extent of £6 or £7 a ton above Queensland. There is a duty of £5 a ton, to which has to be added the freight to Sydney. That will last as long as they can't produce sufficient to meet their own wants. They are now producing so many tons of sugar to the acre, and are getting £7 a ton more than we do, and that goes a long way towards paying expensive labour to cultivate it.

2936. *By the Chairman*: Then, although your sympathies go entirely for employing white labour in this district, you would not, in the heat of summer, put a white man to do the work that a kanaka now does in the cane field? No; I would like very much to see white labour employed on new plantations.

2937. *By Mr. King*: But you think that that can't be done? In a financial light it is impossible. It can't be done.

2938. *By the Chairman*: Throwing financial matters aside, could it be done? I do not think so, except in the winter months.

2939. The physical conditions would not allow them to do it? I do not think we could get them to do it.

2940. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you think that if coloured labour were more easily procured it would conduce to the settlement of small farmers? Yes, I do, to a great extent. I think it is the duty of the Government to take that entirely in their own hands.

2941. In what way do you think that this could be done? By the Government having agents down on the islands, and having central depôts and steam boats specially for the conveyance of passengers. The Government would receive orders for boys for the different plantations, and on the way down the coast they could discharge the number required as they passed the ports. They should take the labour question entirely into their own hands.

2942. The employer paying the cost? Of course. The Government would make it as cheap as possible.

2943. Do you think that this would be feasible—practicable? Yes; I do not see that there can be any difficulty in it.

2944. And you think it would put an end to all abuse? Yes, naturally, for this reason, that the Government controls both ends.

2945. Would

R. R. Smellie. 2945. Would it be more beneficial for the Government to assist small growers in this way than by a central factory? Central sugar manufactories is money thrown away, in my opinion.

21 Jan., 1889. 2946. Do you think that private enterprise would supply the necessary central factories? Yes; I have seen both beetle central factories in Queensland.

2947. From your knowledge of this district, and of the settlers here, do you think they would derive any benefit from the establishment of an experimental farm in this district for the diffusion of knowledge and the distribution of plants? Yes, it would be very valuable to have them all over the country. We have a different climate here from what they have in Cairns. They have got one there. We have a different climate here, and the climate and soil is different from the south. We have a large number of tropical products here. In fact, we can grow anything here. It is a mere question of labour.

2948. *By the Chairman:* Are there many small selectors in this district? Not many. There are nine down the line between this and Mourilyan. They are homestead selections. Four of the selectors have commenced cultivation.

2949. But is not all the available land on the Johnstone River, with a frontage to the river, selected? Yes.

2950. Then there is only the back land open for selection? Yes. There is the Moresby River. That is navigable for ten or eleven miles—deep water.

2951. And is the land open for selection? The most of it is. It runs into some of our selections.

2952. Is it good land for settlement? Yes, good land.

2953. *By Mr. Cowley:* How did you light the mill last year? The gas did very well.

2954. Do you light it with gas now? Now all kerosene.

2955. What was the reason you gave up gas? It was too expensive on account of the duty on petroleum. Petroleum can be bought at home at 9d. a gallon and it cost us 4s. 6d.

2956. What is the duty? Sixpence a gallon.

2957. What process do you use in the manufacture of sugar? What is known as the Despesies process.

We use sulphur and superphosphate. The process of sugar manufacture adopted by this company is as follows:—The juice, as it flows from the crushing mills, is received in a cistern where it undergoes the first stage of the process called the sulphuring. Our clarifiers are each of a capacity of 800 gallons, and for this quantity of juice, of a fair quality, we use from 2½ to 3 lbs. of roll sulphur, which is burned in a small furnace and the fumes therefrom are forced through the juice by means of an injector and jet of steam. The action of this sulphurous acid disengages a considerable quantity of impurities from the juice, and leaves it purer, and in a manner bleached, and considerably acid to the litmus paper test. This acidity is rapidly destroyed by adding milk of lime till the juice becomes neutral. As a matter of practice we usually add this lime gradually as the clarifier is being filled. The juice is then brought to the boiling point, and superphosphate or Ehrmannite, containing from 40 to 50 per cent. of free phosphoric acid, is then added in quantity (usually from 2 to 3 lbs. for ordinary cane juice) in order to bring the liquor back to the natural acidity of the juice as it exists in the cane; this acidity is again destroyed by the addition of a little more milk of lime. And at this stage samples are always taken in a test-glass for careful examination. The litmus paper should show the juice to be about neutral. If the impurities appear, in the test glass, to precipitate rapidly in large flocules to the bottom of the glass, leaving the juice bright and clear, like pale sherry wine, above, the defecation may be considered complete, and it is then run down to the subsider. Every care ought to be taken at the clarifiers to have the juice thoroughly defecated, as any defect here cannot be afterwards rectified in most mills; but in mills supplied with filters the syrup can again be re-treated and any mistake at the clarifiers thoroughly rectified. In examining the sample in the test-glass, if the impurities are in very small flocules, merely black specks continually revolving in the liquor, and apparently unable to precipitate, it is a pretty sure indication that a little more lime should be added; but added in small quantities with care. The liquor remains in the subsiders as long as the requirements of the after-process will permit, in order that all the disengaged impurities may precipitate. The clear juice is then drawn off to the apparatus called the triple effect, where it is evaporated in vacuum at low temperatures to a density of 23 B. The syrup, at a temperature of 140 degrees F., is then discharged into what is technically called the re-heating tank. Here the syrup is brought up to the boiling point, for the purpose of coagulating the albumen, and disengaging it from the syrup, and thus assisting the syrup to filter more freely through the filter bags. At this stage we always add to the syrup a little superphosphate and neutralize with milk of lime, leaving it nearly neutral, but rather to the acid side than otherwise. The syrup here should be bright, clear, and sparkling. It is then run into Taylor's filter bags, where the albumen and other impurities in the syrup are extracted. It is then boiled in vacuum pans in the usual way, and as massecuit is discharged into a receiver and mixer situated just above the centrifugals, and is dried while still hot. The sugar, on being discharged from the centrifugals, is passed through a drier, from which it is bagged direct, and is now ready for market. This is the whole process without interruption, but there are a great many most important details which will show on the debit or credit side of profit and loss according to the care with which they are attended to and carried out. To go back to the subsiders, when the clear juice is withdrawn from these, there remains about 70 gallons of juice containing the lime, superphosphate as used in clarification, and the impurities of the subsidence. This is run down to tanks, where it is brought to the boiling point, and by means of a mont-jus with a steam pressure of 70 lbs. to the square inch is forced through the filter presses, where the clear juice is disengaged, leaving in the presses all the impurities in dry solid cakes. These cakes, by this process, are very valuable as a manure. It will be noted that if these presses are not worked with extreme care, and under constant supervision, ignorant and careless men may cause considerable loss, and mill managers cannot be too careful in having all their connections fixed in such a manner that waste in this quarter should be easily detected. Superphosphate should always be added first and neutralized with lime—if the lime be added first it tends to colour the juice, which no after process can rectify. There has been considerable discussion in some quarters about the benefits or otherwise in the use of sulphur, and in 1886 I had a communication from a home firm requesting me to put the question to the test and report my experience. From close attention to the mill work night and day for six months I was perfectly satisfied that the use of sulphurous acid did increase the quantity of crystallizable sugar, and so reported then, which was adverse to the opinion of an old refiner. For the last two years I devoted my whole attention to the mill work in its every detail,

and

and am still of the same opinion. I may here add that the report of the Commissioners of the Agricultural Department of the United States, who have been engaged for three years practically testing the manufacture of sugar by the diffusion process, has just been published, in which they announce the fact that the use of sulphurous acid does increase the quantity of crystallizable sugar extracted from the cane. This company has also a complete charcoal plant, but for many reasons I prefer the Despesies process as carried out by us and described above. It is more rapid, we get a better defecation, less liable to waste, and no sweet waters to evaporate. The chief use of filtering syrup through animal charcoal is to decolorize it, but if this colour is caused by material impurities held in solution, it has no power to do so, and hence defecation must be very perfect in order that the full benefit of charcoal may be obtained. This is very difficult by the ordinary line process in so general use, and the only process I know of to attain this object is to largely overline the juice, and to discharge it with carbonic acid.

2958. Have you used any other process? Yes, we have tried the sulphur process.

2959. And do you find that you make better sugar, and get a higher percentage by the process you have just named? Yes, but not much difference in cost.

2960. And the advantage so far as you have gone is in favour of the Despesies process? Yes, with it you can always maintain a uniform quality of sugar. Like all other processes, it requires a great deal of care and attention.

2961. *By the Chairman:* In order to carry your sugar from the mill, you have constructed a two-foot railway to the Mourilyan Harbour? Yes.

2962. What was the cost of it? About £20,000.

2963. *By Mr. Cowley:* Or nearly how much per mile? Nearly £3,000 per mile. It was an expensive line, on account of the difficulty in getting through the scrub.

2964. *By the Chairman:* Who was the contractor? Mr. Bashford.

2965. What labour did he carry out his contract with? He commenced with Europeans, but had to abandon Europeans and employ Chinese, on account of the enormous death-rate amongst the Europeans.

2966. Were all the wharves, &c., at Mourilyan erected by yourself? No, they were all in the contract, and are included in the £20,000.

2967. Are the buildings included in that? Yes, the building of the store and the wharf.

2968. What is the carrying capacity of the store? We can on emergency store 1,000 tons.

2969. Can steamers come alongside the wharf? Yes, steamers of 1,500 tons can. The "Barcoo" and "Maranoa" can come in. The "Citra" came in at the beginning of the year with stores, horses, &c.

2970. *By Mr. Cowley:* Then with these facilities you can ship sugar to market at a very low rate? Yes. We have got every facility. When shipping to London we send the sugar by the s.s. "Palmer" to catch the steamer at Townsville. The cost of sending a shipment to an Australian colony is just as much as sending it to London direct. There is this advantage in sending sugar to London, that the charges are just half what they are in the colonies.

2971. *By the Chairman:* Have your shipments to England paid? We have not sent anything but the very lowest class sugar, and for the last we sent we got £14 a ton net. That is about £4 a ton more than we would have got in the Australian colonies.

2972. Then in point of fact you have every facility for shipping by means of the railway and the harbour at Mourilyan for nearly four times the amount of land under cultivation? We have facilities for shipping sugar up to 10,000 tons, and more. Were it not for the drought and the grub, we would average 30 tons of cane to the acre here. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that in this rich scrub land by the river, with high class cultivation, we could produce from three to five tons of sugar to the acre every year; and I believe in high class cultivation—the very highest. It is the cheapest, and best. Hitherto the cultivation of these heavy scrub lands has been done in a very primitive way—hoeing is a primitive idea. I believe that the sugar industry is the greatest industry in Queensland, not excepting gold, tin, copper, or any other minerals, or even squatting. I believe if this industry was flourishing we would export from Queensland over £10,000,000 worth of sugar, &c., per annum. Hitherto it has got no encouragement, and the planter and all his operations has been looked upon as if he was an enemy to the country. You must not look at it in the light of the number of Europeans working on the plantations. Look it at in the light of the enormous number of Europeans who are employed on board ships carrying sugar, working in offices and stores all over the colony—all over other colonies—who are dependent on the success of this industry. The steamship companies who send their steamers up north just now could carry our stores at a great deal less rate if they had a back cargo from the north to the south, and nothing in the north can give them that but sugar. They say it themselves. Here planters situated as we are, far from the south, pay enormous freights for everything that we require; those enormous freights would be reduced immediately if we could give them full shiploads of sugar down to the south, and they cannot get that without sugar.

WEDNESDAY, 23 JANUARY, 1889.

JOHNSTONE RIVER DISTRICT.

(At Geraldton.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq. M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

WILLIAM CANNY examined:

2973. *By the Chairman:* What are you, Mr. Canny? I am manager of the Queensland Sugar Company's Plantation, Innisshoven. W. Canny.

2974. How many years' experience have you had in sugar-growing? About twenty years.

2975. What

23 Jan., 1889.

R. R. Smellie.

21 Jan., 1889.

- W. Canby. 2975. What is the total area of your estate?—Including all the properties? Yes; three blocks of 1,280 acres each.
- 23 Jan., 1889. 2976. How much of that is under cultivation? 600 acres.
2977. With cane only? Cane only.
2978. How many acres of cane did you crush last season? Something over 400 acres last season.
2979. How much sugar did you make? Only 300 tons.
- 2979a. How much molasses? We do not keep any account of molasses.
2980. What do you do with it? Pump it into the creek.
2981. Are you able to tell us what amount of capital is invested in the estate? Roughly stated, it is about £80,000.
2982. Does the plantation pay interest on its outlay and the working expenses? No.
2983. About what is the amount of your annual working expenditure? For the past year, or for the three years?
2984. For the past year? Something between £7,000 and £8,000—say, £8,000.
2985. What labour do you employ? Do you mean all classes of labour?
2986. What labour do you chiefly employ? Kanakas, Malays, and at crushing times, Chinese.
2987. By Mr. King: Europeans also? Yes; Europeans also.
2988. By the Chairman: State the number of kanakas, &c., employed at present. At the present time fifty kanakas, about sixty Malays and Javanees. We have no Chinese at present; the crushing is finished. During the crushing time we have gangs of Chinese, to whom we pay 28s. a week for cane cutting. During crushing time we have a staff of about from fifteen to twenty Europeans.
2989. And all the year round how many Europeans do you have on the plantation? Apart from the present time our regular staff would be fifteen; but at present I have instructions to reduce everything down to the very lowest. I had a letter from Mr. Gray, the managing director, to say that if a good crushing could not be made they would have to close the plantation, as it is not paying.
2990. What wages did you pay each class of labour, commencing with the kanakas? Kanakas engaged in the islands, an average of from £8 to £10, in addition to the cost of introduction and return passage, clothes, tobacco, soap, all medical comforts and attendance, besides rations. The time-expired boys that are re-engaged are paid £20 a year, with the same rations, clothes, tobacco, soap, &c. The Malays we pay at the rate of 50s. a month and rations. To the Chinese we pay 28s. a week without rations; they ration themselves. We pay the engineer £1 a week, the sugar-boiler £3 a week, a second sugar-boiler £2 10s. a week, a blacksmith £2 10s. a week, a carpenter £2 a week, a baker £2 a week, and the overseers average £30 a year.
2991. By Mr. King: Are all those men getting rations and quarters? Yes; rations and quarters. The baker, carpenter, and blacksmith are married men, and they have quarters and double rations. The other overseers who are not married have quarters, and their rations are specially cooked for them. The men in charge of the punts for taking the sugar down the river get 30s. a week and found.
2992. By the Chairman: How many acres of the estate are you able to plough? I have ploughed something like 15 acres during the past season. I would like to stump 200 acres, but having no labour, it cannot be done.
2993. What description of labour do you find most suitable for field work? The kanakas.
2994. Have you employed European labour in field work? Yes.
2995. With what result? The result is that they do not work, and do not care for the work even at a high rate of wages; and since I came north I find that they absolutely refuse to do hoe work or trash cane in the field.
2996. What is the highest rate of wages you have paid Europeans for field work? 25s. a week and rations. The rations are always cooked and served nicely in the boarding-house. I mention that because in my early days in the colony the men had to cook their own rations.
2997. How many acres of cane do you cultivate for every coloured labourer employed? To cultivate properly we would want one man to every four acres.
2998. Now, if you had more of the land under the plough, do you think that you would be able to employ more white labour? Yes. That is labour for cultivation, such as ploughmen. But white men will not do the trashing or hoeing. There would be a percentage of ploughmen on the plantation, a large percentage; but they will not do other labour. I am speaking from my experience for the last twenty years on the Mary River, the Herbert River, and here.
2999. Then, in all your experience during the past twenty years you have found a general disinclination on the part of white labourers to do trashing or field work? Yes; except ploughing.
3000. Do the blacks employed in field work suffer in health? Not at all. I may explain that the new arrivals, on first coming from the islands, suffer slightly, but after being here for a year or so are much better in physique and health than when on their islands, and boys who have returned home and come back to Queensland again, you can at once tell they are old hands because they have more of the appearance of the sturdy Britisher. On plantations where an exceptional number of deaths have taken place they have all taken place amongst the new arrivals.
3001. Does the field work affect the health of the Europeans? Not that I know of.
3002. Would it affect the health of Europeans if they were to do the field work that is now done by the kanakas? I do not believe that they could stand the heat—weeding, hoeing, and trashing. I have tried cutting cane with white labour, but they have knocked up at it and returned to the house. They refused to cut cane in hot weather.
3003. Was that refusal caused by their getting low wages, or was their reason for refusing their inability to work in the hot climate? Inability to work. They were getting good wages.
3004. How do the Javanees compare with the kanakas in field work? The kanakas are very much better.
3005. Is that the result of your experience? Yes. The kanakas are infinitely superior in field work.
3006. Were those men engaged in Java? No. I engaged them in the district for periods of six and twelve months.
3007. What is the cost per acre of clearing the scrub land on this plantation? From £6 to £7. That is falling and clearing off only.

3008. Supposing

3008. Supposing that in addition to clearing and burning off, the land were all stumped and rendered fit for the plough, what would be the cost per acre? Do you mean old cleared land or new land? W. Canny.
3009. Take it all together; take a piece of scrub? The cost of stumping would be £15 an acre in addition to cutting down and burning off. It would cost from £15 to £20 an acre. 23 Jan., 1889.
3010. What machinery have you in the mill? Crushing plant, triple effect, vacuum pans, centrifugals, &c.
3011. Where was it manufactured? By the Fives-Lille Company, France.
3012. Have you any colonially manufactured sugar plant? No.
3013. Do you make an annual overhaul for repairs? Yes.
3014. What is the cost of such overhaul? The average general cost of overhauling French machinery is more expensive than English machinery. I could not say what would be the exact expenditure.
3015. Could you give us an approximate idea? I can give you what it is for the coming season. With material and labour, it would be something like £400 or £500.
3016. Will that all be done by European labour? All by European labour.
3017. Do you employ coloured labour in doing skilled work that Europeans can do? Not at all.
3018. During your twenty years' experience have you seen Europeans at work in the cane field trashing and hoeing? Yes; in a small way. After a very short trial they always give it up. I may mention that before the Gympie Goldfield broke out the average wages paid for labouring work was 15s. a week, but since that I have never known field labour to be less than £1 a week.
3019. Have you any female labour on the plantation? About five females.
3020. Do they work by themselves in the cane, or with the male labourers? By themselves.
3021. Have you a hospital on the plantation? No.
3022. How do you manage if one of the men is taken ill? We place them in a boat immediately and take them to the hospital at Geraldton.
3023. Does the Polynesian Inspector pay periodical visits to the plantation? Yes; and if a kanaka has any complaints to make they make them to him. He musters the boys and asks them if they have any complaints to make.
3024. How often does he visit the plantation? Every six months.
3025. Do you give the money to the boys themselves, or pay it into the Savings Bank? We hand the money to the boys in presence of the inspector. The inspector asks the boys if they wish to deposit any money in the Savings Bank, and, if so, how much. The amount they wish to deposit they hand to him, and he enters it in the book, and deposits it in the Savings Bank for them.
3026. By Mr. Cowley: And you witness it? Yes, I witness it. The inspector then asks me to witness the deposit, which I do.
3027. From your experience do you consider that system preferable to withholding the money from the labourer until the three years of his time has expired? Most decidedly; I think it is a very dangerous thing to allow the wages to run over six months.
3028. By Mr. King: From your experience do you think that the climate of this district is more trying to white men than that of Maryborough? Very considerably.
3029. How so? I may mention that I am chairman of the Divisional Board and a case came before me, which is a case in point. About a month ago a large contractor doing work for the board wrote me a letter, not asking for extension of time, or to stop, but saying that he had knocked off work on all of his contracts, as the men could not go on on account of the excessive heat. If you like I will have the letter put before you.
3030. We would like to know from the contractor whether he knocked off on his own account or whether in consequence of the men refusing to work on account of the heat? On account of the men.
3031. Will you read the letter? Yes, it is as follows:—

[COPY.]

"December 16th, 1888.

"To the Chairman Johnstone Divisional Board.

"Dear Sir,

"I have to stop all Board contracts on hands at present as none of my men can stand the heat. I will start when the weather gets a little cooler.

"Trusting you will not be strict on appointed time.

"I have, &c.,

"DAN. BEHON.

"William Canny, Esq., Chairman."

3032. Is the writer of that letter available? I believe so.

3033. Is the heat of the district considerably greater than in Maryborough? Oh, yes.

3034. Do you find the climate suitable for the growth of cane? Yes.

3035. What average crop do you get per acre in a good average season? From 20 to 26 tons.

3036. Has the season been good lately? Fairly good.

3037. Have you had any short crops? We have had very short crops for the last two seasons.

3038. What was the reason? I believe that the reason was not being able to cultivate cane during the crushing season. We have now what may be called a very dry season for this district. We were not able for want of labour to trash all the cane, and then it was attacked by the grub.

3039. Was that the cane grub? Yes.

3040. To what extent did it affect your crop this year? We lost 50 per cent. of the crop. The crop was just about half of what it should have been.

3041. What do you consider an average crop of sugar per acre? That all depends upon the management. With double crushing you will be able to get much more sugar than with single crushing. I consider that this district should average 2 tons of sugar to the acre. It would be more with plenty of cultivation and labour.

3042. Have you employed any aborigines? Yes.

3043. What work did you employ them at? Working in the fields weeding, and sometimes loading cane on the trucks.

3044. Do they work well? They work very middlingly. I consider them expensive labour—very expensive. 3045. How

- W. Canny. 3045. How many of them do you employ? The most we ever had working was about twenty-five. The average all through last season was about twenty.
- 23 Jan., 1889. 3046. What did you pay them? These men are worked by a native of the island of Maré—old Charlie Maré. We look on him as a sort of chief, and he has great influence with them. We give them food, clothes, tobacco, &c., and pay Charlie Maré £2 a week, and he works a gang of from twenty to twenty-five. I consider them very much more expensive labour than kanakas, and much more unreliable, as they go away just as they please.
3047. How long has your land been under crop—the older portion of it? I should say about five or six years. I have only been here myself for two or three years. I can get the exact information if you want it.
3048. Is there any sign of the yield falling off from exhaustion of the soil? No; I do not think so. The short crops were due to the grub and the drought of the past two years.
3049. Do you buy any cane from the settlers? No.
3050. Would you buy cane if it were grown? Yes.
3051. What price per ton would you be prepared to pay? I consider that 9s. per ton for cane standing on the ground would be a fair price.
3052. If cut and delivered in trucks? I might say 3s. per ton more delivered at the mill.
3053. Have you had any Polynesians die in your employment? Yes.
3054. What was done with the wages due to the men at the time? Paid to the Government officer in Geraldton—the inspector.
3055. What becomes of that money—the money in the savings bank and in the inspector's hands? Do the relatives of the deceased get it? Hardly ever. Relatives of deceased kanakas have very great difficulty in getting this money from the Government. It is hardly ever given to anybody except a wife. If the boy has a brother he seldom gets it.
3056. By Mr. Cockey: You have had considerable experience on the Herbert River on plantations? Yes.
3057. Can you give us your experience there on the labour question? Yes. At Gairloch and Macnade, where I was manager, we found it necessary, in consequence of the expense and difficulty in obtaining kanaka labour, to import to each plantation fifty Chinese, through agents in China; capitation fee, poll-tax, and all expenses costing the plantation about £20 a head. The labour was most unsatisfactory. They gave us a great deal of trouble in trying to get them to work, and to keep them from absconding; but in three months I do not think we had three men in each plantation out of the lot, the others had all absconded. We found great difficulty in identifying them, and the police did not come to help us as they should have done.
3058. You would not recommend a repetition of the experiment? Certainly not, under those conditions.
3059. As chairman of the Divisional Board, have you leased any land to Chinamen? No. The reserves have been leased not by the board, but by the Land Commissioner here.
3060. Do you—that is the board—ever employ any coloured labour for contract work? No. We passed a resolution to the effect that contractors were not to be allowed to employ coloured labour in carrying out contract work for the board. We include in that Chinamen, Malays, kanakas, &c.
3061. That materially increases the cost of the work? Yes. I feel very strongly on that point myself. I consider that in such work white labour should be employed and no other. That is my own private view.
3062. You say it would cost you from £15 to £20 an acre to stump your land. Is this branch of the river more heavily or more lightly timbered than the north branch? I believe that there are more heavy trees on the north branch—more hard wood. We have no hard wood on the south branch.
3063. How many miles of tramway have you on this estate? Two or three miles.
3064. Have you any wooden sleepers? No; all steel. When the tram was laid down we had wooden sleepers.
3065. Did they stand? No.
3066. Does this man Charlie Maré, who employed the aboriginals, treat them kindly? I never knew anybody treat the aboriginals so well as Charlie Maré, or take such care of them.
3067. Is he an educated man? He reads the Bible and writes. He was working for me in Maryborough seventeen years ago.
3068. What varieties of cane do you use on this plantation? The principal variety is rappoe and rose bamboo. We have meera. Those are the best varieties.
3069. Have you any disease in them like the rust of some years ago. Very, very little. The only disease is the grub.
3070. What remedies have you tried to prevent the ravages of the grub? We have dug all round the cane stools, picked the grubs up, put them into a bucket, carried them away, and destroyed them.
3071. Have you done anything further in the matter by consultation with scientific men? Yes; I sent a specimen of the grub to Mr. Gray, and he laid them before the curator of the gardens in Brisbane. The two last lots went to Mr. Souter, of the Acclimatisation Society, Brisbane. We have had no report on them yet.
3072. Do you trash your cane? Yes; whenever we have the labour.
3073. Where did you get your plants from—Did you import them? I got some from Innisfail.
3074. From your experience of twenty years, do you think it advisable to change the plants? Yes; I think it is desirable to introduce new plants into a district.
3075. Have you ever found it beneficial in any other part of the colony to do so? Yes; in Maryborough.
3076. You say that you would be prepared to purchase cane—Are you prepared to lease your land to farmers to grow cane? Certainly. The proprietors of the plantation I managed on the Herbert would be too delighted to cut up the whole of their estates and lease them on reasonable terms to selectors and farmers if they could get them to take it, and thus get rid of the whole of the field cultivation. I may mention that when in the employ of the proprietors of Macnade we tried everything to enter into terms and conditions with the farmers, but could not get the land taken up. I believe that if the system could be carried out it would be the solution, to a great extent, of the question of labour on plantations.
3077. You say that you do not have double crushing machinery? No.
3078. Is your machinery otherwise of the most modern pattern? Yes.
3079. Have you filter bags, or press filters? Press filters, but no filter bags.

3080. Do you think that if the Government rendered you any assistance or any encouragement to work a still it would assist you to pay interest and make the plantation pay? I do. The great thing in working all mills is to have no waste whatever, and any distillery which turns refuse into an article of commercial value is good and would help to meet the expenditure. W. Canny.
23 Jan., 1889.

3081. Are your South Sea islanders easily managed? Very.

3082. Have they committed any crimes? No; at one time they gave us some trouble. That was owing to their getting drink, but they are getting over that now.

3083. Have you done everything you could to stop their getting drink? Yes; I have offered rewards to anyone convicting people of supplying kanakas with grog, and I have had five or six cases in court and got convictions in each case.

3084. Then are we to understand that the evil is decreasing? Yes.

3085. Do the kanakas agree amongst themselves? Yes.

3086. Are there ever any tribal fights? No; occasionally two boys may have a quarrel, but they set to work and fight, the same as Englishmen do, and there it ends and the whole thing is forgotten.

3087. Then that is a personal quarrel and not tribal? Yes.

3088. You say that you are very short of labour. How is it that you are short? What is the cause? The principal cause is want of capital. The planters, when they have large capital invested in their plantations, cannot go to the capitalists and borrow money, and the consequence is that they cannot extend their operations.

3089. How was it that you could not obtain those islanders? What is the difficulty in the way? I believe the great difficulty is that the plantations have no more capital to spend and can't borrow any money, and the cost of getting islanders is so great that they can't do it.

3090. What is the average amount of their passage money and everything? The total cost is from £25 to £30 a head.

3091. If those islanders were more easily obtained, would you extend your operations? Yes.

3092. You have had twenty years' experience. Can you suggest any way by which they could be more easily obtained. From your knowledge of the men, is there any impediment in the way which, if removed, would induce them to come? As long as the trade is left in the hands of the shipowners they will not lower the price. The first boys I employed only cost £10 a head landed at Maryborough, and if it was now under the Government control, by which large profits need not be given to the agents or shipowners, the cost would be reduced. That is the only remedy that I can see.

3093. From your experience of twenty years, do you think it would pay to grow cane by white labour exclusively? I believe it would if the land was cut up into small blocks, and worked by people having families of their own. I believe it will never pay in any part of the North that I have seen to attempt to cultivate or grow cane with wages men.

3094. Would a man be content to allow his family to grow cane if they could make higher wages elsewhere? No; I don't think he would; but it would be an inducement for a man to get a home together, and give employment to the whole of his family.

3095. Are you aware that some years ago the Government distributed two varieties of cane, the creole and the lahina? Have you grown any of it? Yes; the creole. It is much the same as the meera. I could never distinguish any difference between them. I have never seen the lahina up here.

3096. Could you tell us of any other crop that could be grown in the district besides sugar? Nothing; unless on a limited area. You can grow fruit. I know of no other crop.

3097. Do you know if this is being done by any one in the district by white labour? No; by Chinese. There are two fruit growers in the district. They are Fitzgerald and Joyce, and their farms are cultivated by black labour.

3098. Do the South Sea islanders often re-engage? Yes.

3099. What percentage of those you have now are re-engaged? All the boys I have are re-engaged. I have engaged twelve during the past week, and some more came in this morning, and wished to be re-engaged. They were men I had just paid off. I re-engaged them and they commence work on Monday next.

3100. *By the Chairman:* If the population of this district were to increase considerably, and the scrub land became more settled upon, and the land cleared and stumped, and made in a fit state to be cultivated by the plough, do you think that European labour would then be more generally employed? Not except in the way I have told you; as teamsters and ploughmen, but not as wages men. I do not think that any estate could be carried on by white wages men, except those named.

3101. *By Mr. King:* Then they could not be employed hoeing? No, they will not take the wages that will pay. If the land was stumped we would employ more teamsters and ploughmen, but in a cane field there is a certain amount of cultivation that must be done by hand hoeing. About a farm, where wheat, maize, and oats are sown, there is not so much hand labour as in a cane field.

3102. *By the Chairman:* Then from the knowledge of the district you have, and your experience in Maryborough and on the Herbert and Johnstone Rivers, do you think the climate in this part of the colony suitable for families settling on the land, as you mentioned just now? I do.

3103. Do you not suffer in health yourself? No; not very much.

3104. Nor any of your family? I have no family.

3105. You are aware, Mr. Canny, that this Commission has been appointed to inquire into the sugar industry of Queensland, the causes of its depression, and to obtain suggestions, if possible, from those engaged in it, as to how the industry can be improved. Now, from your own knowledge, are you able to explain the cause of the present depression? I think so. I think the first and principal cause of the present depression in the sugar estates is, that some four years ago the capital, so far as regards investment in sugar plantations, got limited in consequence of the uncertainty of labour. I know, from my own knowledge, that even good people, with good estates that had been improved, who were willing to go in for further extension, but could not get the capital to do so, and that was the first check it got. It is a very good and a very fine industry, one of the finest in the country, and I think that if the labour question could be settled that not only would we find that prosperity would again come back to the sugar growers, but capital would come to their assistance and enable them to again come to the front.

3106. How long have you been manager of the present plantation? Three years next April.

3107. How long have you been manufacturing on it? This is the third season.

3108. What

- W. Canny. 3108. What was the price of the sugar of your first output? I think the crops netted, after paying all charges, about £1.5 per ton. I am not speaking exactly, but very near it.
- 23 Jan., 1889. 3109. Was that in 1886? Yes.
3110. Do you not think that the low price of sugar has had something to do with the depressed state of the sugar industry? Yes; but I do not think that we will ever have the high price for sugar again.
3111. And do you not think that the large increase in beetroot sugar, supported by bounties, has had something to do with it? Yes; there has been a combination of circumstances.
3112. In view of this combination of circumstances what would you suggest as the remedy to be applied for the improvement of the industry, so as not to allow the plantations to collapse? The first thing that will be any benefit to the plantations is to give them a certain amount of reliable labour for field work. Really without it capital will not come back, and without it fine estates, on which a large amount of capital has already been invested, will be crushed. That is one of the principal remedies I think, and I think that if the bounties paid for the manufacture of beet sugar in Europe were removed, it would be another factor to assist the industry, as it would ensure a higher price being obtained for cane sugar than we get at present. I do not think we need ever hope to get a system of bounty fed sugar here, so I do not mention that.
3113. You are aware that the importation of Polynesians for work on sugar plantations ceases at the end of 1890? I am.
3114. Are you able to state what, suppose the Act is enforced, will be the effect on the plantation of which you are manager? I believe it will be shut up.
3115. Do you not think that the company will resort to the employment of European labour? I am certain that it would be absolutely impossible for them to do it without the loss of many thousands every year.
3116. Then in that case the land would return back again to its original condition? Yes.
3117. When you speak of reliable labour do you refer to the kanaka? Yes, I consider that it is the best. I do not think that a kanaka ever deprived a white man of a day's work; in fact, I think that the employment of kanakas has increased the number of white men employed, and secured labour for them that they would not get otherwise.
3118. Have you ever heard the white population object to the employment of kanakas in field work? Yes, in the old days, when they were first employed, but since they find that it is the only labour for field work I have never known any one object to it. I have heard working men themselves on plantations say that instead of the kanakas doing harm they do good.
3119. Have you, in the course of the evidence you have given before the Commission, been speaking in relation to the employment of these men in field work only? Yes, field work only.
3120. You would not engage them in any employment on the plantation that could be performed by white men? Mill work can be done very well by European labour.
3121. For how long a time do you think that those South Sea Islanders can be employed in future on this plantation? That is a question I would not like to answer. I think there must be something definite and reliable before the confidence of capital will again come back into the channel from which it was taken. You will find on inquiry that what I say is correct. You will find that none of the sugar estates are extending their operations, except the Colonial Sugar Company, and they seem to have an enormous capital at their back. They have gone in heavily, and are doing so now.
3122. I think that you are in full sympathy with the employment of your fellow countrymen if possible? In all cases. I will give you an illustration. When I first took Eton Vale, Maryborough, I employed from seventy to eighty white men, and the result was a very heavy loss to me. Mr. Cowley knows the Mary River district.
3123. By Mr. Cowley: What was the price of sugar at that time? About £30 a ton. I only tell you this to show you that I have always gone for white labour.
3124. Then you would not recommend the employment of kanakas now if you were satisfied that your own countrymen could do the work in the field—hoeing and trashing? No. At the same time there would be no profit if we had to pay £1 and £1 5s. a week and rations for white labour.
3125. That is at the present price of sugar? Even at an increase of 15 per cent. on the present price the field work cannot be carried on by white labour.
3126. Is that owing to the rapid growth of weeds in a tropical climate with a tropical rainfall? Yes.
3127. Have you ever employed newly arrived immigrants in field work? Yes, on the Herbert River, a few years ago.
3128. What rate of wages were they engaged at? £1 a week.
3129. Were they a success? Yes, as ploughmen and borsedriers, but not at hoeing in the cane field or work like that. We got new arrivals for three years at from £1 to 25s. a week; the head ploughman got 30s. a week.
3130. Did none of those men engage in hoe work? No.
3131. Then, practically, excepting at Maryborough, you have not employed white men in hard field work? Yes, at the Herbert River we gave them employment cutting and loading cane, but they could not do the work.
3132. By Mr. King: They could not do the work? No, they could not.
3133. By Mr. Cowley: Will they contract to do this work? They were offered a contract, but they would not accept it. We had to pay Chinameu high wages, and I would never employ Chinamen when I could get white men to do the work.
3134. By the Chairman: Have you found any difficulty with the deceased islander's friends because they could not get the money of a deceased relative? The effect in many cases is that the boys will not deposit as much money into the Savings Bank as they otherwise would do, because they say "If me die, Government he keep it."
3135. Then you think that some steps ought to be taken by which the money of deceased islanders ought to be given to some relative of his, whose relationship could be established to the satisfaction of the Government? Yes. It could be established by the police magistrate, or by two justices, and evidence given by owners of plantations or their officers, by which the identity of the relationship could be proved, and there would be no trouble about it. It would have a good effect on the labourers, and would only be

3136. There would be no difficulty in ascertaining the tribal rights in cases of this kind, would there? W. Canny.
 No. A boy should be able to leave his money to whom he likes.
3137. *By Mr. Cowley:* Do you think it practicable for the Government to take the introduction of 23 Jan., 1889.
 islanders into their own hands? Yes, I do; I believe it would do away with all abuses, and all that the boys complain of. The officers in charge of these vessels should be the very best class of men obtainable, and be paid a much higher salary than at present, and as the cost comes out of the pocket of the employer of the labour the taxpayer would have nothing to complain of. If necessary the capitation fee should be increased, so as to get first-class men—men paid as much as our best police magistrates.
3138. And from a planter's point of view you think that would be a wise experiment to try? I do. I think it would be a wise and a humane one.
3139. Do you know of any other cause that prevents the islanders from coming to Queensland? One cause is that they are not allowed to carry firearms.
3140. Are you aware from your own knowledge that that is a grievance? Yes.
3141. Can they get them from any other country? They can get plenty from French and German traders.
3142. Then you think that our refusal to let them take away firearms does not prevent the islanders from obtaining them? The fact is that they get the arms, and in consequence the trade is taken out of the hands of our people and put into the hands of foreigners. I also think that it is merciful that they should have firearms to protect themselves.
3143. Do you think that if there was a Government scheme of immigration and plenty of islanders could be obtained the estate would pay even at £15 per ton for sugar? I do.
3144. Is that the lowest price that sugar has ever netted from your knowledge on any plantation you have been engaged on? Yes, the lowest.
3145. You have heard some talk about a reciprocity treaty with the other colonies, would that benefit the plantations? Yes, it would.
3146. To a very considerable extent? Yes; they would benefit in sending their sugar to the Victorian market to the extent of £3, and in sending it to the New South Wales market to the extent of £5. But it would not make much difference in New South Wales because they are large growers themselves.
3147. From what you know of this district, is this town of Geraldton supported by the sugar industry? Is there anything else to support it? Sugar is the only thing that supports Geraldton except a few hundred bunches of bananas. If the plantations were to close, four-fifths of the people would be away in less than six months.
3148. Do you think that this district would benefit by the establishment of an experimental farm here, if properly conducted? I do, if it was conducted on the proper line, and I think it would be the means of proving what variety of cane could be profitably grown by white labour. A properly established experimental farm would benefit this district greatly, because new varieties of cane could be cultivated in a satisfactory manner.
3149. You have a wonderful area of rich agricultural land, and yet there is nothing of any moment going on here except the cultivation of sugar. Do you think that state of things arises from ignorance of what the land will best produce? I do not think so, because they can see before their very eyes what it will produce. An experimental farm would be a great boon, and would give a great impetus to this district, where we have an area of rich agricultural land, such as I believe does not exist in any other part of Australia, and any scheme that would prove what could be grown properly in it would be a national benefit. Whether we choose to grow tobacco or sugar cane on our land, what we want to do, in my opinion, is to produce national wealth.
3150. *By the Chairman:* Do you not think that the establishment of an experimental farm would be the best means of increasing the national wealth? I believe it would, if it was the means of letting settlers know what could be grown profitably.
3151. Have the planters ever formed an association in this district? I believe they have; but it has not been carried on for some time. They used to hold frequent meetings for the exchange of ideas.
3152. *By Mr. Cowley:* Were you a member of the Planters' Association in the Ingham District? I was.
3153. Did you meet regularly? Yes; we met regularly, and made notes of the general working of the plantations, and dealt with important questions.
3154. Did you consult the best authorities on sugar growing? Yes; and on one occasion, when the district was overrun with a plague of locusts, the planters combined and adopted means which resulted in the plague being cleared out of the district.
3155. What was the sum expended in that effort? Nearly £1,000.
3156. Were you chairman of that association? Yes.
3157. Did you as chairman of that association apply to the Government to assist you in your object? Yes; and we were flatly refused. The Minister for Lands said the Government could not help us.
3158. Then the whole of that cost was borne by the plantation owners? Yes.
3159. *By the Chairman:* Then you can say, from your own knowledge as manager and owner for twenty years, that the planters have always acted together, and in consultation for the successful growth of sugar? Yes.

THOMAS GEORGE WHITE, examined:

3160. *By the Chairman:* You are a duly qualified medical practitioner residing at Geraldton? Yes; and T. G. White. Government medical officer.
3161. How long have you been in the district? I had been here four years on the 14th January.
3162. What is the general health of the locality at the present time? It has greatly improved from what it used to be. 23 Jan., 1889.
3163. You mean that as the scrub land becomes cleared and settled on the health of the residents improves? Yes.
3164. Do you visit the sugar plantations in the immediate neighbourhood? Yes; frequently.
3165. How do you find the general health of the kanakas on the plantations? It has greatly improved during the past two years.
3166. Do you receive many of them into the Geraldton hospital? Yes; all the severe cases.

3167. What

- T. G. White. 3167. What is the mortality? From May 1886 to the end of that year there were twenty deaths, or one in eight of those admitted. In 1887 there were 435 admitted, out of which there were twenty-four deaths, or one in eighteen of these admitted. In 1888 there were 459 admitted and twenty died, being one in twenty-three of those admitted.
3168. You are speaking of the Polynesians admitted into the hospital? Yes.
3169. Do you know what is the mortality in the district generally amongst the Polynesians? I cannot say. The majority of the deaths that take place outside of the hospital are caused by accident.
3170. *By Mr. King*: Is this mortality due to any defective management on the plantations? No; the boys are exceptionally well treated.
3171. *By the Chairman*: Do you think the establishment of an hospital at Geraldton was conducive to the saving of life amongst the kanakas? No doubt about it at all, as shown by the return I just read.
3172. Do these islanders get everything that they require in the way of medical attendance and medicines? Yes.
3173. *By Mr. King*: What are the diseases from which they suffer? Chest disease, such as consumption, pneumonia, and pleurisy, are the primary cause of death.
3174. Is this district, in your opinion, a healthy one for Europeans? It is getting more healthy every year.
3175. What do Europeans principally suffer from? Malarial fever.
3176. Is it of a bad type? About three years ago it was a very bad type, but now it is getting better every year.
3177. What was the number of deaths last year amongst the whites? I cannot speak of those on which no inquiries were held. In the hospital, besides kanakas, there were 174 admitted in 1886, and there were eleven deaths, and seven of those were Europeans.
3178. What were the others? Javanese and Chinese.
3179. What was the number in 1887? Admitted, 103; eight deaths, of which five were Europeans. In 1888 there were 118 admitted; six died, of whom three were Europeans. There were only three adults who died in the whole district last year, and they died in the hospital.
3180. Then the rate of mortality is not extremely high? No.
3181. Did any of the deaths amongst Europeans result from sunstroke? No; I have not seen a case of sunstroke since I have been here.
3182. Any cases of apoplexy? I have had one case of apoplexy during the last few months.
3183. *By the Chairman*: Do you think that the climate here, now that the scrub land is being cleared, is suitable for Europeans? It is improving yearly, but in summer it is very trying for Europeans.
3184. *By Mr. King*: As clearing extends you can expect the climate to get more healthy? Yes. In the early days there was a great deal of sickness. I may add that the Javanese and Japanese and Chinese who come into the colony are very subject to small-pox, and, in my opinion, they ought to be re-vaccinated before they are allowed into the colony. I merely draw your attention to this. If it once got a footing it would be a very serious thing.
3185. *By the Chairman*: Are you aware that in Honolulu the Chinese and Javanese are not allowed to land till they have been vaccinated? No. It ought to be the same here.

JAMES WALKER CUTTEN examined:

- J. W. Cutten. 3186. *By the Chairman*: You were a farmer on the Darling Downs? I was.
- 23 Jan., 1889. 3187. What part? Felton Homestead.
3188. Have you taken up a homestead selection in this district? My brother has done so. I am manager here for him.
3189. Where is the selection? Near Clump Point.
3190. How many acres have you selected? Altogether 900 acres.
3191. How long have you been in possession? We have been residents there only four years.
3192. How many acres have you cultivated at present? Nearly thirty.
3193. What are you growing? Fruit principally.
3194. What kind? Pineapples, bananas, mangoes, citrons, oranges, and lemons. We have a few odd plants, such as cocoa and coffee, but this has been a bad season and nearly put an end to them.
3195. Have you had any yield from any of the fruit trees you have planted? Not from any of the fruit trees.
3196. Then all this time up to the present you have been living on your means? No, we have had returns from pineapples, bananas, and maize. As we cleared the country we planted maize before we tried trees.
3197. How did the maize yield with you? Not well. The land is too rich, the maize does not do well the first two crops.
3198. Have you tried sugar? Yes, and it grows very well.
3199. What labour do you employ? Aboriginal.
3200. Have you many of them? At times we have as many as fifty, but as an average we have about ten. We keep a record of all the boys and the days' labour they do. We have at present—since 5th November—five kanakas. They are time-expired boys. The aboriginal labour is unreliable—we could never be certain of having them.
3201. Have you employed any Europeans? None, except our own labour.
3202. Will your industry admit of the employment of white labour? No, not at present.
3203. *By Mr. King*: What do you contemplate growing? Fruit.
3204. How do you ship the goods to market? By the steamers "Palmer" and "Burdekin." We put the fruit in our own boat and take it to the steamer, which calls once a week. The "Palmer" calls regularly at Clump Point.
3205. Have you anything to complain about in the manner in which the fruit is treated? The case fruit they can't treat very badly, but the bunches of bananas they crush dreadfully, and take no care of them.
3206. Have you had any complaints from the agents as to cases being empty? Our cases never go further than Townsville.
3207. Where do the bananas go? Townsville.

3208. What

3208. What is the average loss to the bananas from injury in the boats? I have no record, because the J. W. Cullen. bananas are sold direct to the agents at so much a bunch.
3209. *By the Chairman*: What do they charge per bunch for taking them from your place to Towns. 23 Jan, 1889. ville? 6d.
3210. Are there any other selections in the immediate neighbourhood of where you are? About one and a half miles away there is another selection.
3211. *By Mr. King*: Do they go in for the same business? Yes. They grow tobacco.
3212. *By the Chairman*: Have you tried tobacco? We have a small patch of tobacco with which we are experimenting.
3213. Do you think that it is likely to succeed? Smith is doing very fairly with his.
3214. *By Mr. King*: What quantity does Mr. Smith grow? He has nearly four acres this year. It has been too dry for his crop this year.
3215. Have you heard Mr. Smith say what average crop he gets to the acre? No. I know that he gets 9d. a lb. for his tobacco.
3216. Is he satisfied with the result? He is planting more.
3217. *By the Chairman*: Are you satisfied with your prospects? I think that after a time it will pay.
3218. With the labour you are at present employing? Yes.
3219. Would it pay you to employ Europeans? No, not at present, because we would have to wait too long for returns. Two of my brothers are at present at Croydon, and they send down money to keep the farm afloat. The last year has been a very bad one for bananas, and we had a small crop of pineapples, bananas only realised from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 9d. in Townsville.
3220. How has your health been since you have been here? For the first eighteen months our health was not at all good, and we had fever continually, but for the past twelve months it has been very good.
3221. Is the soil good? Very.
3222. How does it compare with the soil on the Darling Downs? It is nothing like it, nothing to be compared to it in strength; it grows anything. But if we had the Felton soil here it would be mostly unmanageable, on account of the extreme wet weather.
3223. *By Mr. King*: Is this land of yours scrub land? Yes.
3224. *By Mr. Cowley*: How many of you are there carrying out the work? Two, myself and my brother. For the first eighteen months there were four of us.
3225. During the four years, with the help of aborigines, you have only put thirty acres under cultivation? Yes, but we had a house to build, and fencing to do and other buildings to put up. We have made a breakwater to land our goods under, because without it we could not land anything from a boat.
3226. Does it pay to employ aborigines? Yes.
3227. How do you recompense them for their labour? We give them rations, and to those who are sufficiently civilized to wear clothes, we give clothes to. You have a certain number of the friends of those who work to keep as well—women, boys, and old men. Just as we are wanting these aborigines the bêche-de-mer fishers come and take the boys away. We should get assistance to put a stop to this. We should be allowed to engage the boys under agreement.
3228. *By Mr. King*: Do they take these boys against their will? No, but they offer inducements which they have no right to, and which I cannot.
3229. What inducement do they offer? I do not care to say.
3230. *By the Chairman*: Do they leave you no labour at all? They leave us all the refuse labour and they take away all the best men, whom we have clothed and fed, just as we want them and leave us nothing but the very young and very aged.
3231. What do the bêche-de-mer men offer them that you do not give them? We do not give them grog.
3232. Do they give them opium? I am not aware. They take them away at the best part of the season and land them again without feeding them during the wet season, and we have to feed them all when we have not sufficient labour to keep them employed.
3233. Who run the bêche-de-mer boats? Europeans.
3234. What port do they come from? All the ports between Townsville and Cooktown.
3235. Do they pay the boys anything? Yes; they pay the boys they take away. When the boys are landed, they have a lot of flour and tobacco, but that is all consumed in a very few days.
3236. *By Mr. Cowley*: During that time they do nothing at all? No. When I left on Tuesday last we had had no boys for a week.
3237. *By Mr. King*: Do the boys go into the bush after working a short time? They will at times.
3238. If the boys were indentured to you, you would not object to their going into the bush? No; it would simply be a protection against the boys being taken away from us. You cannot use compulsion with the aborigines. At the present time they are a very heavy charge on us, because, being a bad season, we have not enough potatoes to give them, and if rain does not come soon, and cause the potatoes to grow, it will be a serious expense to us, because they have to be fed, and in bad seasons the fruits in the scrub are not such good crops as they usually are.
3239. Have you made any application to the Government for the establishment of an aboriginal reserve? No; because I do not think they are of any value. If you establish a reserve, and it is known that they can get food and clothes without work, it becomes a harbour for loafers. If an aboriginal reserve were established, the motto should be "No work, no ki ki."
3240. Are there any missionaries amongst the blacks up here? None.
3241. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do your kanakas work well? Yes, very well.
3242. Have you got as many as you want? At present I have as many as I can pay.
3243. What wages do you pay them? 10s. a week and their rations; that is £1 a week and their clothing. Their clothing and tobacco comes to about £6 a year. Tobacco is mentioned in the agreement. They are engaged under the Act.
3244. And medical attendance? Yes, when they require it.
3245. From your experience so far you prefer kanaka labour? Yes.
3246. And do you find them suitable labour? Yes.
3247. Have the blacks (aborigines) ever committed any depredations on you? Very slightly.

3248. If

- J. W. Cullen. 3248. If the Government were to assist you in supplying rations to the aborigines would you undertake to distribute them? Yes.
- 23 Jan., 1889. 3249. If you could not obtain either aboriginal or kanaka labour would you carry on operations here after you have fulfilled your conditions and get full possession of the land? No; we would not unless we made an experiment first to find if it was useless. We settled on this piece of land as a home, and we would either lease it or do something else with it.
3250. How many brothers are assisting you to keep the farm going? Two.
3251. Do they remit their wages to you? They take contract work and remit their earnings to be invested in the farm.
3252. Without that assistance it would be impossible for you to carry on? Yes, it would be impossible.

MARTIN O'DONOVAN examined :

- M. O'Donohue. 3253. *By the Chairman*: What are you? I am acting land agent and am ranger of Crown lands for the Mourilyan district.
- 23 Jan., 1889. 3254. Can you supply us with any information as to the area of land taken up in the district, the amount under cultivation, and the amount under homestead selection? Yes. There are 66 occupied conditional purchase selections, with an aggregate area of 76,831 acres; 9 forfeited conditional purchase selections, with an aggregate area of 7,580 acres; 14 occupied homesteads, having an aggregate area of 2,238 acres; 4 forfeited homesteads, having an aggregate area of 640 acres; 19 occupied agricultural farms, having an aggregate area of 6,480 acres; no forfeited agricultural farms. I may explain before closing this part of the return that there are three other selections, the owners of which have given notice to forfeit, but they have not yet been dealt with by the department. They have not been surveyed, and I do not know their area. Then there are four special leases to Chinese, having an aggregate area of 36 acres. The approximate area of cleared land held under the "Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876" is 4,232 acres. The approximate area of cultivated land held under the "Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876," including that used for fruit growing, and excluding that used for the cultivation of sugar cane, is 882 acres. The approximate area of cleared land held under the "Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1884-5" is 125 acres. The approximate area of cultivated land held under the "Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1884-5" is 125 acres. The area of cleared and cultivated land as mentioned above was originally covered with a dense jungle. I may mention that the area of 882 acres of cultivated land held under the "Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876" comprises about 500 acres of grass land, and the balance, about 382 acres, is used for corn and fruit growing.
3255. What are those special leases to Chinese? They are market gardens, under a certain section of the Act. They applied for them. The first Chinaman who applied for a lease got it on sufferance for six months, and is liable to be removed at any time on six months' notice. The second Chinaman got his lease on the same terms. The two last leases, one for fourteen acres and the other for twelve acres, to two different Chinamen, were for five years. That is about two years ago, and there are three years to run. The lease is conditional only. There is a clause in their lease to the effect that if the land is wanted at any time for public purposes they are to give it up.
3256. What rent do they pay? £1 an acre. It is very good scrub land.
3257. Are the two Chinamen you mentioned first paying rent now? Yes; the same as the others.
3258. You are well acquainted with the country here? I know it well. This morning I received notification that those two leases are to be cut up into areas of three and a-half and five acres. This is simply in compliance with the wish of some people. The surveyor has received instructions to cut up certain areas of land, which will include the two large special leases held by the Chinese.
3259. *By Mr. King*: Do the settlers in this district lease their land to Chinamen? They have done so after making it a freehold.
3260. What rental do they get from the Chinamen? I know some selectors who are getting 30s. an acre rent from the Chinamen.
3261. How many Chinamen are there in this district employed upon the land? I should say that each of these small Chinamen employ from three to four Chinamen, and they do the same in other places.
3262. Can you give any estimate as to the total number of Chinese employed in cultivation? There are altogether about eighty. Those are labourers.
3263. *By the Chairman*: You are not speaking of sugar plantations? No; only Chinamen employed by Chinamen, and the owners of private property who employ the Chinamen themselves.
3264. *By Mr. King*: Is all the land that we could see from the top of the Basilisk open for selection? No; not the whole of it.
3265. *By Mr. Cawley*: You say that out of the 880 acres of cultivated land 382 are under fruit and corn. Does that include any of the waste land? No; it is all under crops of some sort.
3266. Is that the total area of land under crops except the sugar land? Yes.
3267. *By Mr. King*: Have the conditions on those large selections been performed? They have been very well performed.
3268. We were in Cairns the other day, and we were told that in one case fruit trees had been planted on a conditional purchase, and that as soon as a certificate was issued that the conditions had been fulfilled they were taken up and replanted on another selection. That could be done. I know a case of a man named Hamilton, where trees were put in and planted well and a certificate given, and they were removed across the river to another selection, and the homestead as well.
3269. The selector's house? Yes.
3270. Was this done after or before he had obtained his freehold? Nothing was done till he had obtained his freehold.
3271. *By Mr. Cawley*: Are any of those Chinamen naturalised British subjects? I do not believe they are.
3272. Are those leases let subject to compensation for improvements? No.
3273. Then a Chinaman might spend £10 or £15 an acre planting his land, and it could be taken away from him at the end of six months? Yes; there is no compensation.
3274. And some of these leases are about to be resumed? Yes.
3275. And the Government will reap the full benefit of the Chinaman's labour? There is nothing to compel the Government to give any compensation.

SUOLTO

SHOLTO STILLINGFLAT BOWLES examined:

S. S. Bowles.

3276. *By the Chairman* : You are Polynesian Inspector for this district? Yes.

3277. How long have you been here? I have been in charge of this district since September, 1886. I was for two years before that under Mr. Pennefather, at Ingham, when the districts were worked together. 23 Jan., 1889.

3278. What is the number of Polynesians employed in this district? Six hundred and thirteen; that includes twelve ticket boys. This is the return up to 31st December last.

3279. What are those Polynesians employed at? Sugar.

3280. Are there any employed outside of sugar plantations? Yes; there are some.

3281. In what occupation? Tropical agriculture.

3282. With selectors? Yes; with selectors. Some of the selectors are freeholders.

3283. What is the general health of the Polynesians? I think that they are pretty healthy.

3284. You visit the plantations regularly, and see how the boys are? Yes; I am often at the plantations.

3285. Do you see that the hospital requirements are always in accordance with the Act? Yes; always.

3286. Do the men receive their wages money themselves, or is it deposited in the Savings Bank for them? They receive it from the employer, and if they like they deposit a portion of what they receive. Sometimes they deposit one-third with me.

3287. Are they ready and willing to receive the money? Yes; they like to get it themselves.

3288. Do many of them hand the money to you to be put into the Savings Bank? They very seldom send their money to the bank.

3289. *By Mr. King* : Do the time expired boys hand you their money to be banked? Yes; a good many.3290. *By the Chairman* : When a kanaka dies, and any money is due to him what do you do with it? The money is sent to me by the planter and I forward it to the officer in charge of the department, in Brisbane, and if there are any claims by relations the balance of the money in possession of the Minister, after paying all burial expenses, which amount to £2 10s., are given to the relations.

3291. Do you know of any case where the money has been paid to the relative of a deceased kanaka? Yes, often.

3292. Have any complaints been made of such applications having been refused? Sometimes, but seldom, it has been refused. As a rule, if the claim is at all a good one, the relative claiming the money gets it. The claim of a cousin is never recognised, only a brother, or a husband or wife or child. At one time boys used to come from the islands and say, "Brother 'long o' me die; me want money," but there was no relationship.

3293. *By Mr. King* : Will they pay a person named by the deceased if the deceased says he wishes a certain party to get his money when he dies? No, I do not think so. I have sent in claims from cousins, but they have been refused.

3294. Then a Polynesian is not allowed to will his money to whom he chooses? If the money is in his own hands he can, but not if it is in the hands of the Government, except in the case of relations.

3295. Have you ever sent in a claim where a deceased has said that he wished his money to be paid to a certain party? No.

3296. *By the Chairman* : Have any complaints been made by the islanders during your visits of being over-worked or ill-treated? If there is any thing that they think is wrong they come in and complain to me. Boys have come in and complained, and I go out and inquire into the matter.

3297. Have you had many such cases? Not many.

3298. Have you ever found ground for complaints? Yes; two cases last year. I have only taken two cases for ill-treatment to court during the past two years.

3299. What did the ill-treatment consist of? Of a boy refusing to carry logs and sleepers. They were not excessive in weight, but he used some very rude language to the white man, and the white man lost his temper and hit the boy hard. There was something to be said on both sides.

3300. As far as your experience has gone in this district do the kanakas appear to be very well satisfied with their position? Yes; I think so.

3301. *By Mr. Cowley* : You say that money has often been paid to the relatives of deceased islanders. Can you give us a return, showing us how much money has been paid and how much refused? Yes; I think I can do so.

3302. Have you ever known an instance in which it has been refused to a near relative? No; I do not think so. There is only one case that I might mention. It is not of the exact kind you refer to, but £10 was deposited by a boy in Maryborough some years ago. He himself tried to get it but it could not be traced. I think there must have been some mistake in the spelling of the name of the boy. I could not do any more than forward his case to the department. He is a boy who has been back to the islands once. I got the history of the case as well as I possibly could.

3303. In each of the cases of ill-treatment that you have named did you get a conviction against the offender? Yes.

3304. Were they employers of labour or servants in the employ of the plantation? One was an overseer and the other was a ganger—both servants.

3305. Have you ever had any cases against any employer of labour? No.

3306. Do you know if the employers themselves are anxious that their kanakas should be protected? They are.

3307. Then you do not think that such ill-treatment is done at the instigation of the employer? No, no.

3308. Do the employers assist you in your prosecution? No.

3309. Did you ask them? No. I did not want them.

3310. *By the Chairman* : I asked you to prepare the Commission certain returns as to the boys employed on the different plantations in the district. Do you now furnish us with those returns? Yes. [See Appendix C.]

3311. Do you find that the Polynesians show any desire to obtain liquor? Yes, I think they do.

3312. But not with the knowledge or consent of the employer? As a rule, I do not think they do. Some employers are more particular than others.

3313. Have

S. S. Bowles. 3313. Have you found any persons supplying those islanders with liquor surreptitiously? Yes, we have obtained several convictions against those people? Here is a list of the prosecutions and convictions.

23 Jan., 1889. [See Appendix D.]

3314. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you find that the employers are desirous of putting a stop to this? Yes, they certainly wish to have it stopped.

3315. Have they assisted you? Yes and they have taken cases into court themselves. The employers are opposed to this sort of thing, and it is their desire to stop it.

3316. As Polynesian Inspector of this district can you offer any suggestions to the Commission by which the supply of liquor to the islanders may be prevented? An attempt should be made to prevent other coloured races, such as the Chinese, from supplying these kanakas with liquor. They get it and it would be easily prevented. But the staff of police is so small at present that it is utterly impossible to prevent it.

FRIDAY, 25 JANUARY, 1889.

JOHNSTONE RIVER DISTRICT.

(At Geraldton.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

GEORGE KERR examined:

- G. Kerr. 3317. *By the Chairman*: Have you taken up a selection in this district? I have bought a selection.
3318. How many acres? 1,280 acres.
3319. What is it called? Cessford.
3320. Have you got any under cultivation? I have.
3321. How many acres have you cultivated? Fifteen acres.
3322. And what have you cultivated? Orange trees, bananas, and fruit trees. I have tried several kinds of fruit trees; I have not, however, been successful with all kinds. All tropical fruits grow well.
3323. Have you gone in for maize or English potatoes? I have tried both. The English potatoes grow very fairly in certain seasons.
3324. And maize? Maize will not do well at all. It was a failure.
3325. Do you grow coffee? Yes; I have about twenty coffee trees bearing.
3326. How have they succeeded? Very well.
3327. Do you think from your experience of coffee that it is a plant that will grow well here? I have every confidence in coffee doing well in this district.
3328. Have you made any of the berry into coffee? No; I have not tried it.
3329. Do you know how to do it? No; I am merely growing this as an experiment. When Dr. Bancroft was on the river he got a large collection of plants from the Acclimatisation Association, and when he left he handed this collection over to me, and I have been growing most of the plants I got then.
3330. What labour do you employ on your selection? I have one kanaka, and use aboriginal labour. I can always have a few boys when I want them.
3331. How long have you been working on your selection? Three years.
3332. Are you able to make a living on it? No; not at present. If there was a mill on the same side of the river, and I could grow cane for it, I would do very well. I tried cane when I went there first and it grew a very good crop.
3333. *By Mr. King*: How do you make a living? I have a partner, and we go in for contracts. We have a contract for clearing the undergrowth off the telegraph line to Cardwell.
3334. Then it is by working off your selection that you keep your selection going? I had a fair amount of capital when I started, but for the last year or two I found that I could not keep myself, and I had to go in for other work.
3335. Are you able to sell the produce off your selection? Nothing to speak of. I believe I would have had a good crop of bananas, but last year the grub got into them and they came to nothing.
3336. Does the grub attack the banana? Yes; very badly.
3337. What do you think are the drawbacks to carrying on tropical agriculture in this district? Labour is the principal drawback, and want of capital is the other. There does not seem to be any capital in the district to speak of, unless it is that of the Colonial Sugar Company.
3338. When you say that labour is a drawback, do you mean that you cannot get labour? Yes; we cannot get reliable labour. The cheapest labour you can get, if it is not reliable, is not cheap.
3339. You say that you would go in for cane growing if there was a mill on the same side of the river. — Would you go in for cane cultivation with European labour? No.
3340. What does it cost you to clear land? For felling and burning off and clearing, about £7 or £8. That is now; a year or two ago it was a good deal more.
3341. What would it cost to stump new land immediately after burning and felling? Taking the average of the country in the district, I do not think it could be done for less than £30 an acre.
3342. After five or six years could it be done for less? It could be done for a trifle after six years. I have not had much experience at it, but I think it could then be done for £6 an acre.
3343. *By the Chairman*: How have you cleared your fifteen acres? I have them cleared very well, and a good many of the stumps are out.
3344. *By Mr. King*: What description of labour would you require to make it profitable for growing cane? Kanaka labour is about as suitable as we could have.
3345. I suppose you know all the selectors in the district? Yes.

3316. Do

3345. Do you think that the selectors generally would wish to have kanaka labour? I think so. I have spoken to men who were in favour of employing nothing but European labour when they first came into the district. They were working men, and now, after about a year or two's residence here, they are convinced that the sugar industry cannot be carried on by European labour.

3347. Then the kanakas are the best of the different classes of labour you have seen employed in the district? Yes; I consider them the best.

3348. Have you cultivated any land by Chinese? My land is rather far back from the river, and Chinamen like to be near a river. I had Chinamen looking at it once or twice, but it is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the river, and that is too far for them.

3349. If you had kanaka labour, you would be prepared to go in for extensive cultivation? There is no mill. I might go in for cultivation if there was a mill.

3350. If you had kanaka labour and a mill to which to sell your cane, you would put the land under cultivation? Yes.

3351. How do the white selectors in this district keep their health? Their health has been better during the past two years than it used to be. There was very little fever last year.

3352. Then you think it is a healthy district for Europeans? Yes; after they get acclimatised. For two or three years they are liable to fever, but after they get over that they are healthy enough.

3353. Have you seen any new chum emigrants employed here? Yes; any number of them.

3354. How do they stand the climate? They stand it very well. There were a number employed at Goondi last year all through the crushing, and there are a good many there still.

3355. Do they make any complaints? No; except of the heat.

3356. By Mr. Cowley: Are you a practical farmer? I was brought up on a farm in the old country.

3357. Have you been farming in any country before you came up the Johnstone? No; I had a cattle station.

3358. How old are your coffee trees? Three years. They are not quite three years yet; they were planted out in the autumn.

3359. Are they bearing? Yes; all bearing.

3360. Do you find that they have suffered at all from leaf disease? No. As far as I can see there is nothing, unless it is the scale which is in a few of them. The citron and orange trees grow near the coffee, and I believe that the ants have carried the scale from them.

3361. Are your trees perfectly healthy at the present time? Yes; and showing no signs of disease in the leaf that I can see. It might be seen by a practical man.

3362. Do you prune your trees at all? I have topped them, as I thought it best to keep them under.

3363. Judging from your experience as a coffee grower, do you think it would pay to grow it with white labour, taking into consideration the pruning and picking? It would pay if the land were stumped and clear of roots, where a horse hoe could be used; but coffee trees do not cover the ground like cane, and the weeds would come up very strong, and it would require more labour to keep the land clear under coffee than it would under cane.

3364. But you would not be able to use a horse in a coffee plantation? Yes; if the plants are sufficiently far apart. I plant mine 15 feet apart.

3365. Are you a contractor at Goondi? Yes.

3366. To carry out your contract what labour do you use? Aboriginal.

3367. Do these men work satisfactorily? Yes; they do.

3368. Does it pay you to employ them?—Can you make a profit out of their labour? No; there is just bare wages, and sometimes not that.

3369. How do you recompense them for their labour? I generally give them food and tobacco, and pay them at the rate of about 1s. a week.

3370. And you make no very great profit out of them? No.

3371. Can you rely on them, or will they go away at a moment's notice? They will go away at a moment's notice, and if they want to go away it is no use trying to keep them.

3372. What is the largest number that you have had working for you at one time? We had over seventy, I and my partner. My partner's name is Peter Forbes.

3373. Do you know of any other contractors in the district who are employing aboriginals? Yes; there are three men who do.

3374. Do you know how many they have had at one time? They have had between seventy and eighty on Goondi, working for the sugar company.

3375. Can you form any estimate of the number of aboriginals working in the district? Yes; I think there might be 200 actually at work. That is all told, counting boys, gins, and pickaninnies—they all do a little.

3376. You said that you had seen Europeans working on Goondi without any complaint. Were they employed in field work or in the mill? Both.

3377. What was the nature of their work in the field? Drawing in trucks, and laying rails, and such work as that.

3378. By Mr. King: Did you ever see them weeding or hoeing? No.

3379. By the Chairman: Have you any objection to tell us what you paid for your land? No. It was a selection taken up by Daniel Dupont, and he bought a selection from me in Cairns. I made all the improvements and took the selection off his hands, and the Government consented to the transfer. I went on as his bullock at first, and made the improvements out of my own pocket.

3380. By Mr. Cowley: Was the land under the "Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876" or the Act of 1884? It is under the "Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1884" now. He took it up under the 1876 Act, but had it transferred under the Act of 1884. He died that just before I came to terms with him. It is virtually now an agricultural farm under the Act of 1884.

3381. By the Chairman: What contracts have you taken on Goondi in which you employed aboriginals? Weeding and cane cutting.

3382. Would you undertake to carry on farming on an agricultural farm such as you have now, and in the way you are doing now with European labour, if you could obtain it? No; unless it was very much cheaper than it ever has been yet. A certain portion of the work could be done by European labour, but not exclusively.

G. Kerr.
25 Jan., 1889.

3383. *By Mr. King*: Do you think that a European labourer can work with the hoe? No; I hardly think so. Chinese do a lot of that sort of work; they do it for considerably under £1 a week and found. They do it for about 16s. or 17s. a week and found.
3384. *By the Chairman*: Where were you working before you came to this district? On the lower part of the Dawson.
3385. From your experience in working at Goondi Plantation, do you think that the climate in the summer time is suitable for Europeans to work in? Yes, certainly; certain kinds of work.
3386. Do you think that the climate is adapted for Europeans doing the work that kanakas now do? I have no doubt that Europeans could do the work, but I do not see that it would pay anybody to employ them.
3387. Have you ever known Europeans refuse to weed, or trash, or cut cane? No; I have never employed Europeans at that sort of work.
3388. Would you be willing to do such work yourself in the field? No; I would not work at hoeing or anything else like that in the field amongst the cane. It is not so bad felling scrub in the open, but I would not work in the cane field.
3389. When you were working out the conditions as bailiff of the selection what labour did you employ? European and aboriginal.
3390. What is the nature of the improvements on the land? I let a contract for felling scrub, and burnt off part of it myself, and let a contract to Chinamen to burn off the remainder.
3391. To whom did you let your contract for felling the scrub? To Europeans.
3392. *By Mr. Cowley*: Who took the contract? Four Europeans worked it themselves.
3393. How much did they clear? Fifteen acres.
3394. Did they only fell the scrub? Yes.
3395. What did you pay for felling only? £4 10s. That is over four years ago, and labour was much dearer than it is now. That amount counted on the improvements to the selection.
3396. Then if you had paid £10 an acre would the Commissioner of Crown Lands have accepted that if you could produce a receipt? Yes; I believe so.
3397. *By the Chairman*: Outside of cane-growing, what do you think this district is capable of growing that would prove a profitable occupation for settlers? There are several tropical products that I think would do very well here. But there is no market for them. There is the Chinese fibre grass, I believe that would do well in this district. Then there are coffee and rice. I have grown rice and had a fine crop. I grew about a quarter of an acre.
3398. *By Mr. King*: Did you try tobacco? Yes, it grows wonderfully; it is a weed with me, and I have a lot of trouble in keeping it off the land.
3399. Does it make a good leaf? It would if the plant was attended to. I believe it would grow a fine leaf. I have had leaves eighteen inches long, from self-sown plants.
3400. *By the Chairman*: Of your own knowledge can you suggest anything by which the industries you have enumerated can be assisted? No. There is not much that I can suggest in the meantime. I would like to think the matter over. There is one thing. The most of the land has been taken up by people who took it up for speculation in connection with the sugar industry. That land is still being held and there is no capital coming in to open up the country. If capital were introduced into the district many industries would flourish.
3401. *By Mr. King*: You mean that those unoccupied selections are a hindrance to the prosperity of the district? They are.
3402. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you been made aware that if sufficient inducement were offered in the shape of the growing of cane a central mill would be started here? No, I have not.
3403. Do you think that there would be 1,000 acres of cane grown by small farmers if a central mill was started? No, there are no small selections on the river. They are all 1,280 acre selections.
3404. If the land were leased to them at 5s. an acre per annum for ten or twenty years, do you think they could be got to grow cane? That is a very difficult question to answer.
3405. *By Mr. King*: At what price would you be prepared to sell cane, cut and delivered, on the river or line? It could be cut and delivered for 11s. a ton.
3406. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say that many products could be grown if there was a market for them, and you enumerate coffee, rice, and maize. Are you not aware that there is a splendid market for all those articles, and that they are in great demand? Yes; but the producer never gets any value for his products.
3407. *By the Chairman*: Do you think that if a botanical station or an experimental farm were established somewhere in this or the Cairns district, where tropical plants could be grown, and information given thereon to farmers and settlers as to what were the best plants to grow and how to grow them, it would cause those lands to be more opened up than they are now? Certainly; it would be a first-class institution.
3408. Would you, as a local agricultural farmer, avail yourself of an opportunity of that kind? I should certainly.
3409. Do you think that other farmers in the district would do the same? There are very few who take any interest in agriculture in this district. There are only two or three selectors on the river who ever took up land with an intention of making a profit out of it by farming or fruit growing.
3410. Do you not think that it is the want of labour that keeps farmers from growing produce on their land? The greater portion of them think of making sugar for a profit, and they are too far from the mills. There is one mill in the centre of the district, on the Delta, and they seem to have as much cane as they can crush.
3411. But you yourself acknowledge that you can grow coffee, rice, and lemons? Yes; but I have no market and no labour, and the grub destroyed the bananaes.
3412. After these three years' experience, and supposing that there were no grub, do you think you could grow coffee and make it pay with the labour you now have? Yes; with aboriginal and kanaka labour I believe I might.
3413. Then it resolves itself simply into a question of labour. Do you think it would be possible for families to make it pay? Yes; twenty or thirty acres is sufficient for a man here. It is equal to three times the amount of ground in other districts.

3414. Am I to understand that the only obstacle is labour? Labour is a great obstacle.
 3415. What other obstacle is there? Want of capital.
 3416. But supposing that a man had capital, what is the great obstacle? Well, labour principally.
 3417. What agricultural land is there here available for small farmers? There is no land excepting what is far back and far up the river.
 3418. Then all the best available land having water frontage has been selected already? Yes.
 3419. Are the lands that are open for selection now accessible? No, there are no roads, and if there are they are too bad.
 3420. *By Mr. King*: Do you know if all the best land has been selected? Yes, all the best land.
 3421. Is that the best situated land for selection? Yes; there is the scrub further back. I have not been far up the branch. I have been up towards the Russell and out that way.
 3422. *By the Chairman*: In clearing the track for the telegraph line, what was the character of the country you passed through? There are a good few miles of it all dense scrub, and the rest is open forest country.
 3423. What labour do you employ in clearing the telegraph line? Principally aboriginal.
 3424. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is it not a fact that the Government surveyors in running these telegraph lines choose the most open country? Yes.

(At Mourilyan Harbour.)

JAMES TOUTAN PROCTOR examined:

3425. *By the Chairman*: What are you, Mr. Proctor? I am an American citizen.
 3426. What is your occupation? I am in charge of Captain Seymour's property—managing for him.
 3427. *By Mr. King*: What do you call the estate? Esmeralda.
 3428. *By the Chairman*: How many acres are there? 1,280.
 3429. How many acres are cultivated? We have sixty-two acres of cleared land, and there are now under cultivation eighteen acres.
 3430. What are you cultivating? India-rubber, bananas, and pineapples.
 3431. Are you growing the India-rubber trees with success? They are growing very well, but it is rather soon to say whether they will be a success or not.
 3432. *By Mr. Cowley*: How old are they? Three, four, and five years old. The oldest are not quite five—say, four and a-half years.
 3433. Where did you get the trees from originally? From Ceylon.
 3434. Do you find any difficulty in propagating them? No.
 3435. *By Mr. King*: Have you had anything to do before with the cultivation of India-rubber? No, never.
 3436. *By the Chairman*: How old have the trees to be before they commence to yield? Between four and five years, from what I have read.
 3437. *By Mr. King*: How do you obtain the rubber? We strip the bark off for about five or six feet—the outer bark—and the substance comes out and forms a coating which when thick enough we roll up into balls. We do not take off all the bark.
 3438. That does not destroy the tree? No; the wound grows up immediately and is covered up.
 3439. Can the operation be repeated every year? Yes; the trees suffered a good deal from the recent drought. We have had very little rain here.
 3440. What is the yield supposed to be per tree? I cannot say in this country, but the tree is supposed to yield 150 lbs. in Central America.
 3441. *By Mr. Cowley*: That is from very old trees? Yes.
 3442. Have you obtained any rubber yet? Yes; we had some sent to the Melbourne Exhibition, but the trees were rather young.
 3443. How much did you send? Three or four pounds.
 3444. Have experts passed any opinion on it? Not yet.
 3445. You do not know if there will be a market for it, or if it will be marketable? No; it is supposed to be worth from 3s. to 7s. per lb.
 3446. *By the Chairman*: Have you grown any coffee trees? Yes; but merely experimentally. It has done very well indeed.
 3447. What kind? We have Liberian and Arabian coffee.
 3448. Which succeeded best? They both did well.
 3449. *By Mr. King*: Have you tried any tobacco? There have been some plants put in the ground. It seems to do very well.
 3450. Can you tell us what quality it is? No; I do not know much about tobacco. I understand coffee and sugar cane, but tobacco I am not experienced in.
 3451. *By the Chairman*: What labour have you been employing? We were employing Polynesian labour, but for the last year we have been employing Javanese and Malays.
 3452. How many? I have from two to six. I also have a lot of those bushmen—aboriginals. They are very handy and work very well, but you can't rely on them. Some days I have had fifty aboriginals at work, and next day I have not had ten.
 3453. How does the selection support itself at the present time? It has been merely an experiment; the gentlemen who own it have not gone in very extensively.
 3454. You mean that the selectors are keeping you here experimentally? Yes; they are both men of money—Messrs. Seymour and Allan.
 3455. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is it freehold? Yes; for nearly three years it has been freehold.
 3456. *By Mr. King*: Have you tried to employ any European labour? Yes; I had some when I came here first. I had some men clearing.
 3457. In your opinion which of the different classes of labour you have employed is the best? The white men are the best, if they do not get sick, and can carry out their contracts.
 3458. Did those men get sick in your employment? Everyone of them, without exception.
 3459. Were they able to complete their contracts? One man was, with help. I had a lot of pressing to do to persuade him. The man worked very well, and I helped him with some of my own men, and he completed his contract.

G. Kerr.

25 Jan., 1889.

J. T. Proctor.

25 Jan., 1889.

2460. Then

- J. T. Proctor. 3460. Then the others were not able? No, they did not stop for two weeks, and after they went away I told the man who had taken the contract to take some of my boys and finish the contract, which he did.
- 25 Jan., 1889. 3461. *By the Chairman*: What do you consider the best class of labour that you have employed? Personally I like the kanaka best.
3462. What did you pay to white men for working by contract? From £6 to £9, according to the character of the clearing.
3463. Did you fall and burn and stump, or fall and burn only? We felled and burned off; we did not stump.
3464. *By Mr. King*: What wages did you pay the kanakas? I think about £6 a year. I had four boys.
3465. *By the Chairman*: What are you paying the Javanese now? From 12s. to 15s. a week and rations.
3466. How do you pay the aboriginals? I give them tobacco, clothing, and food.
3467. Have you exported any bananas or pineapples? Yes; we have done so.
3468. *By Mr. King*: Did it pay? Well the bananas pay sometimes, not always. Pineapples do not pay.
3469. What prevents the bananas from paying always? The great competition from Fiji.
3470. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say that your coffee trees are doing well. Have you picked any coffee off them? I sent some to the Exhibition, prepared.
3471. How much per tree do they yield? I can't say. We may be able to tell this year. This was a very peculiar year with the coffee trees. During the drought they flowered sparsely, and the young coffee came on it, and as soon as the rain came, where the flowers had been waiting they all came out again, and so there are berries of two different ages on the trees.
3472. *By the Chairman*: From your experience of coffee growing does it appear to be well adapted for coffee growing in this district? Yes, with good seasons. I have seen it growing in the New Hebrides and in Ceylon.
3473. Then the experiment that you are trying on the part of the owners is to develop a trade, if one can be developed? Yes; I think that is the object.
3474. Did you plant the india-rubber trees? I planted some of them. The others were planted by Mr. Thompson, who was here before me.
3475. And are your trees healthy and give promise of bearing well? Yes.
3476. Is the climate here healthy? Well, we cannot complain. We have been exceptionally free from fever. I can't speak for the balance of the population.
3477. You said that Europeans were afflicted with fever? Yes; the Europeans who were working here. But recently the climate has been dry and healthy. I have not suffered from it myself. There have been no other Europeans here.
3478. *By Mr. King*: You say that you have had considerable experience in tropical climates; have you seen any tropical production that you think would be suitable to this climate that you could recommend? Above all I could recommend coffee. I really believe that coffee would grow remarkably well here.
3479. Have you been amongst cocoa? No; I do not understand anything about it.
3480. Have you planted any cocoanuts? A few. They are doing very well.
3481. Are they bearing yet? No, not yet; they are not old enough. Cocoanuts do not generally bear until they are seven or eight years old.
3482. *By Mr. Cowley*: What labour do you think could be employed in the cultivation of coffee to make it pay? It would have to be very cheap labour, because when you commence to gather the coffee it requires a lot of people to do it.
3483. It would not stand paying a high rate of wages to Europeans? No; it would not.
3484. Independent of picking, is not pruning a big item? Yes; pruning and weeding the trees is a very big item.
3485. Have you had any practical experience in coffee planting? Yes. I have been overseer in the New Hebrides Company in the New Hebrides islands.
3486. Is coffee grown successfully there? Yes.
3487. Is it exported? Yes they export it to Noumea. The company was called the Societe de Caledonie et Nouvelles Hebrides.
3488. Do you know what yield the trees gave there? I would not like to say at present. I would have to hunt the figures up. I would not like to say too much.

MONDAY, 28 JANUARY, 1889.

HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.

(At Halifax.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.
A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

JOHN ALM examined:

- J. Alm. 3489. *By the Chairman*: What are you? A farmer.
- 28 Jan., 1889. 3490. You are a member of the Herbert River Farmers' Association? Yes.
3491. And you have been deputed by that body to attend and give evidence? I have.
3492. Have you a selection in the district? Yes.
3493. What is its extent? 160 acres.
3494. Homestead? Homestead.
3495. Under the Act of 1876? Yes; under "The Homestead Act of 1876."

3496. What

3496. What area of that have you cultivated? About 115 acres the present year.
3497. What is it cultivated with? Sugar cane chiefly.
3498. *By Mr. King*: Out of that 115 acres, how much is sugar cane? Ninety acres.
3499. *By the Chairman*: What is your average yield of cane per acre? Last year 14 tons.
3500. What was it the previous year? 22 tons.
3501. And the year before that again? The year before about 30 tons.
3502. What is considered an average crop per acre to be payable? Well, that depends very much upon circumstances. The labour that we are employing, and many other considerations. The first year when we had a good crop we were under a great disadvantage, because we had to pay a very high price for labour. Then the price of cane was higher the first year than the years after.
- 3503-4. What is considered a fair average annual crop? About 25 tons per acre.
3505. Did you crush your cane or sell it? Sold it.
3506. How much did you get for it? By the agreement which was made first, 10s. per ton—in any case I had to grow thirty acres. The agreement made afterwards was for 8s. per ton.
3507. *By Mr. King*: Did you cut the cane for that? No.
3508. The company cuts and takes away? Yes.
3509. *By the Chairman*: What labour did you employ to grow that cane? I employed different kinds of labour. I tried white men; I have employed Chinamen, and the last two years I employed some kanakas.
3510. What rate of wages have you paid to the three classes of labour? To Chinamen I have paid 24s. a week and they keep themselves. Previously I paid 16s. and found them.
3511. *By Mr. King*: What did you pay to the whites? £1 a week and rations.
3512. *By the Chairman*: What did you give to the kanaka labour? I have given from 6s. to 10s. a week, and found them as provided by the Polynesian Act.
3513. Those are time-expired boys you have employed? Yes.
3514. In growing cane what labour do you find most suitable? Kanaka labour.
3515. Would it pay you to give 20s. a week and rations to white labour to grow cane at 8s. a ton? Certainly not.
3516. Have you tried any other tropical productions on your selection besides sugar cane? I have tried maize, if that is called a tropical product.
3517. It is hardly a tropical product.—Was it a success or failure? It was not a success. The crop was very unreliable.
3518. Beyond sugar cane and maize you have not grown anything else? I tried to grow English potatoes. Sometimes I got a fair crop, but it is not to be depended on. What we would call a fair crop would amount to 3 tons to the acre.
3519. How much a ton do you get for them? I have sold them locally at 10s. per cwt.
3520. That is £10 a ton? Yes; and I have had a yield of 10 tons to the acre under favourable circumstances.
3521. What do you call favourable circumstances? There are very few years that you can get a crop. Sometimes it is too wet. I have often planted them, and the wet has come on and killed the seed in the ground. When we get suitable weather, not too much rain and not too dry, then potatoes succeed.
3522. You have not grown coffee or tobacco? No.
3523. Is there any particular matter that the Farmers' Association desired you to bring under our notice? Well, the Farmers' Association think it would be a very desirable thing to establish experimental farms throughout the district.
3524. Do you think from your personal knowledge that if such a farm were established the farmers would avail themselves of it? I think so.
3525. Have you discussed this matter among yourselves at your meetings? Yes; it has been often discussed.
3526. And favourably received? Yes.
3527. Is there any other matter they desired you to bring under our notice? With regard to the cultivation of sugar cane, they desire me to state that if suitable labour is not provided the sugar industry must collapse. We have tried growing cane with white labour, but white men do not like the labor; they will do any other hard work outside rather than go into the cane field. Chinese labour is reliable, but too expensive, and we consider the Chinese a very undesirable class to encourage amongst us. The farmers think that kanaka labour is the most suitable. With regard to the regulations, we have at present to pay £5 return passage money, and that adds considerably to the price of kanaka labour. Sometimes we might not have a kanaka for more than six months, yet we have to pay the £5 return passage money. Well, at the end of the six months perhaps that kanaka goes home, and we will not be refunded the £5; or he goes away from the district, and we have great trouble in getting the money, because we cannot find out who his next employer is. It would be fair to make some alteration in the Act in that respect.
3528. You are aware that the importation of Polynesians ceases at the end of 1890? Yes.
3529. What will be the probable effect of that in this district? If it ceases I think the ultimate result will be the collapse of the sugar industry. The farmers are in one mind on that subject.
3530. Have you never discussed at any meetings of the association the probable contingency of that Act being put into force, and the steps you will take when that is done.—Have you considered the subject of changing your crops? That has been properly discussed. We have given it consideration, but we have not come to a conclusion as to what crops we could get in, as it has not really been tried what will do best here.
3531. Are the facilities for conveying produce to market satisfactory? No.
3532. Can you suggest in what way they could be improved? By having communication with deep water at the port.
3533. *By Mr. King*: That is railway communication you mean? Yes.
3534. *By the Chairman*: Can you give us any idea of what it costs to take produce to Townsville from the Herbert River? It costs about £2 a ton taken away from the river bank at the present time, but of course it costs the farmers who are away from the river more to bring it to the bank.
3535. Then all the goods consumed by you are liable to the same charges backwards? Yes.

- J. Alm. 3536. Is all your land under plough? About fifty acres are under plough. I think a supply of kanaka labour is absolutely necessary for several years to come, until the land can all be put under plough. Even then the labour would be necessary to a certain extent, but more of the work could be done by white men.
- 28 Jan., 1889. 3537. Was it scrub or forest land that you selected? Scrub land.
3538. How was it cleared—by white or black labour? I cleared a good deal of it myself, and afterwards I let it by contract to Chinamen.
3539. What did it cost per acre to clear? About £5 an acre to have it cleared, and an extra £3 an acre to have it planted with cane.
3540. *By Mr. King*: When you speak of clearing, you mean felling and burning? Yes.
3541. *By the Chairman*: How much did the land cost when it was cleared, and burnt, and stumped, and made ready for the plough? I should say it would cost about £12 an acre. After clearing and burning it is planted, and then the crops have to be worked with the hoe until most of the stumps have rotted out. Then there are stumps to take out afterwards and make it ready for the plough.
3542. *By Mr. King*: That is what you say will cost up to £12 an acre? Yes.
3543. *By the Chairman*: How do you find the climate of the Herbert River, so far as the health of Europeans is concerned? The climate is generally healthy. In opening up the country, we suffered a good deal from fever, but new country is always to a certain extent unhealthy. It improves afterwards.
3544. Speaking as a farmer resident in the district, are you satisfied with your prospects here? No; I am not satisfied.
3545. Can you make a good living here? I have not improved my position since I started cultivation. There are many drawbacks, which I have explained.
3546. *By Mr. King*: How many farmers are there in your association? Twenty-five are registered.
3547. Are they all small holders—homestead men? Yes; most of them are.
3548. Do they all cultivate cane? No.
3549. How many of them grow cane? About ten.
3550. What area of cane do you suppose they cultivate altogether? Between 500 and 600 acres.
3551. Supposing that the company's mill on this river stopped working, and there was no one to buy the cane, what would the farmers on the river do.—How would it affect them? Well, they would cease to be farmers. They would have to give it up if nothing else cropped up.
3552. Is it your opinion that white men could do such work as trashing, and weeding, and cutting the cane? No; I do not think that they could do it. They have never proved that they can do it.
3553. If you were looking for a job would you take one of trashing, or cutting, or weeding? Certainly not. I have been a working man on the river, and would rather do any hard work than go into the cane field.
3554. Did the cane last year suffer from anything besides the drought? Yes; it suffered from grubs.
3555. Have you tried any remedy for the grubs? No; I have not.
3556. *By Mr. Cowley*: You might state what the association has done? They sent down grubs to the Agricultural Department, and it is having them investigated. Experiments are now being carried on in the department to find out, if possible, a remedy.
3557. *By Mr. King*: Did the grubs do your cane any damage last year? Yes; a great deal. I had five acres completely destroyed. It did not go to the mill. Through the field the cane was more or less damaged and the growth impaired.
3558. How much per cent. was destroyed? I should say 10 per cent.
3559. Ten per cent. of the whole? Yes.
3560. Including the five acres? Yes; the five acres were completely destroyed.
3561. Has your cane ever suffered from any other pest besides the grub? No.
3562. We heard something of locusts some years ago? They did not come down this way.
3563. What are the wages paid to white labourers, outside of farming work, in this district? I think from 25s. to 30s. a week.
3564. What do the Divisional Board men get? There is no weekly labour employed by the Divisional Board.
3565. *By Mr. Cowley*: There used to be? Yes.
3566. What did the men get? 7s. per day and found themselves.
3567. You say your crop averaged 14 tons—was that ratoons or plants? Ratoons and plants.
3568. How many acres of plant cane did that include? Fifteen.
3569. Did that include the five acres that were destroyed? No; what was destroyed was just ratoon cane.
3570. Have you ever employed any indented kanakas? No.
3571. Why have you not introduced them? Because they are too expensive at first. It is beyond the means of the farmer in general, and me particularly.
3572. If you could procure these men at £12 or £13 per head would you take them? Yes.
3573. In preference to taking other men? Yes.
3574. Had you the offer of a Government central factory here? Yes.
3575. Did you accept? No.
3576. Why not? Because one of the conditions was that we should employ nothing but white men, and we could not see our way to growing sugar cane by employing only white men.
3577. After two or three years' experience, have you any reason to change that opinion? No.
3578. Do you, as an association, compare notes and read papers on agriculture or sugar cultivation? Yes; we do.
3579. You have said that you object to this £5 return passage money. Do you think it would be a benefit to the farmers if the Government undertook to collect that money from the next employer? Yes; if it would make it surer to get the money.
3580. Before a man agreed with another employer, if the Polynesian inspector collected the money would it be of assistance to you? It would assist us so far that it would make sure of getting the money when the boys went away from us; but it would not alter the fact that if you employ a Polynesian for six months you have to pay his passage home again if he wants to go home. That increases the wages very much when you employ a man for a short period.
3581. You

J. Alm.

28 Jan., 1889.

3581. You say there are twenty-five members belonging to the association. Does that include all the farmers in the district on this side of Ingham? Not all.

3582. There are ten cane-growing. Do the others grow crops for the mill owners, such as sweet potatoes. Do they produce sweet potatoes or corn, and are they dependent on the mills? They are to a certain extent dependent on the mill owners. They are selling their crops to them.

3583. If the mills were removed those farmers would be robbed of their livelihood to a certain extent? Yes.

3584. Do you think it would be a good plan if the Government were to undertake the introduction of kanakas? Yes; if it would cheapen the cost of them; but that is the objection at the present time. £28 per head is the first cost.

3585. What amount do you think you could afford to pay, provided the islanders were indentured for three years? I think £10 or £12 a head would not be considered too much.

3586. That is independent of the capitation fee? Yes.

3587. You could afford to pay that well? Yes; I think so. At present the kanakas are got from the islands at about £6 a head per year.

3588. By the Chairman: Do you know they are asking more than £6 a head? Yes.

3589. By Mr. Cawley: How do you find the kanakas you have employed agree with the white men in the district? Very well. I find no objection among the white men to kanakas.

3590. Did you ever have trouble yourself with the kanakas? Never.

3591. Do you pay their wages regularly? Yes; I pay them every six months to the kanakas, before the inspector.

3592. You said Chinese were objectionable labour. Am I to understand that you would never employ them if you could get kanakas? Yes; certainly.

3593. You prefer to deal with kanakas entirely? Yes.

3594. What do you do with the islanders after they have been taken ill? Send them to the Polynesian hospital.

3595. Have you had any deaths among them? No.

3596. None at all? None at all, and, except on one or two occasions, have had no kanakas in the hospital.

3597. Then your men have always been exceptionally healthy? Yes.

3598. Have you ever employed any aborigines? Not since I began cane growing; I did a long time ago.

3599. What varieties of cane do you grow? Meera, rappaee, and some cheribon was planted last year.

3600. You have confined yourself exclusively to these varieties? Yes.

3601. Has your cane shown any sign of rust? No.

3602. Then you have had no loss except through the grubs? No.

3603. Are there any signs of the grub now? No. I think it is not time for them to appear yet.

3604. Did you receive a letter from the Agricultural Department in Brisbane saying that as far as experiments had gone yet they believed that cultivation would destroy the grubs? No. I had a letter saying that they were still experimenting and hoped to find a remedy.

3605. Have you had any cane attacked on ploughed land? Yes.

3606. Are the grubs worse on the ploughed land than on the land that has not been stumped? I could not say if they were worse but I have seen plenty cane inland that has been as well cultivated as any on the river, and that cane was destroyed by the grub.

3607. By the Chairman: Are you well acquainted with the district and know most of the farmers in it? Yes.

3608. How many of them have leased their land to Chinamen to cultivate? I know of one block which is almost entirely given to Chinamen to cultivate.

3609. By Mr. Cawley: What should you think would be the area under crop by Chinamen here? About 200 acres.

3610. Leased by Chinamen I mean? It is leased by Chinamen but the agreement is made by white men with the Colonial Sugar Company. They have an agreement to grow the cane.

3611. By Mr. King: On what terms is it leased to the Chinamen? I could not say how much is paid per acre. I think a nominal price.

3612. By Mr. Cawley: Have you leased any? I have four acres of a garden that the Chinamen keep.

3613. By the Chairman: What do they pay you for it? 30s. an acre.

3614. Do you know of any land that is let on tribute for sugar growing to Chinamen—that is, the land is leased to the Chinamen to be cultivated, and the proprietor takes a certain amount of sugar cane as equivalent to the rent for the land? I know of land that has been leased to Chinamen, the Chinamen grow the cane and get from the proprietor a certain price for it. The proprietor is under agreement with the Colonial Sugar Company. He sells the cane to them and draws the money from the company.

3615. By Mr. Cawley: Is that done because the company will not recognise Chinamen? No; the company has made agreements with Chinamen.

3616. By Mr. King: What price did this man give to the Chinamen for the sugar cane? 7s. a ton.

3617. By Mr. Cawley: And what did he get? 8s. a ton.

3618. By the Chairman: Do you know whether the farmers have been trying experiments with other articles besides sugar and maize? Rice has been tried.

3619. Has it succeeded? Yes; it yielded a fair crop.

3620. Have they gone into fruit growing—the growing of lemons, limes, and mangoes? There is a great deal grown in the district, but there is no market for the fruit.

3621. Has anyone attempted to grow grapes? They have been tried, but have not given a satisfactory result.

3622. Is the result of your observation and experience that the land is more adapted to sugar growing than anything else? That is my conclusion.

3623. Beyond what you have stated the association desired you to make known to us their wishes, have you any suggestions that you can yourself offer for assisting the sugar industry or any way in which tropical agriculture can be assisted? The suggestions of the association have been put down. I know of nothing else. I do not know of any other way of helping the sugar industry than by giving it the labour it requires. I think it could be helped by entering into reciprocity treaties with other colonies.

3264. For

- J. Atm.
 3624. For the admission of sugar free, in consideration of our taking articles from them duty free? Yes.
 3625. You think that would be an advantage to the sugar industry? Yes. A great disadvantage at the present time is the extra duty put upon everything by the new tariff. If the sugar industry were protected by reciprocity there would not be so much said about it, but now everything we use has risen in price and the sugar remains the same.
 3626. Then you think that when the tariff was revised something should have been done for sugar? Yes.

NEILS CHRISTIAN ROSENDAHL examined:

- N.C.
 Rosendahl.
 28 Jan., 1889.
 3627. *By the Chairman*: You are a farmer on the Herbert River? Yes.
 3628. You are a member of the Herbert River Farmers' Association? I am.
 3629. Ifave you been deputed by them to attend before the Commission and give evidence? I have.
 3630. Ifow long have you been a resident on the river? About fifteen or sixteen years.
 3631. How long have you been farming during that time? About eleven years.
 3632. What area of land do you hold? 160 acres.
 3633. A homestead? Yes.
 3634. How much of it have you cultivated? About forty-five acres altogether. Some of that is not under crop at present.
 3635. What have you chiefly grown? First I grew corn and sweet potatoes, and since the Colonial Sugar Company entered into agreements with us I have been growing sugar cane.
 3636. How did you succeed with your maize and potatoes? Not at all. I succeeded right enough for a year or so, but aphid got into the corn and I only got five bags out of six acres.
 3637. Since then you have been growing sugar for the Colonial Sugar Company? I gave up growing cane for a year until I entered into an agreement with the company.
 3638. How many tons of cane does your soil produce per acre? It varies. The first year I had a good return of 49½ tons; the second year it was something like 38 tons; the third year it was about 16 tons, and last year about 13½ tons.
 3639. Can you explain to us the cause of that difference? Yes. Of course the second and third years were the ration crop, but there came a very heavy wet season, which stunted the growth of the cane, and it has not recovered since. Last year I planted a good lot of young cane, and it looked very well up to this time of the year, but the grubs came and destroyed it by eating the roots right away. I had to plough it out again this season.
 3640. Grubs attacked your cane, even in the ploughed land? Yes.
 3641. What labour have you employed in the growth of sugar cane? All kinds—white men, Chinamen, and kanakas.
 3642. What wages have you paid the white men? £1 a week.
 3643. And their board? Yes; I had one man for six months working for £20, and I have had two on weekly wages at £1 a week.
 3644. Are you satisfied with the employment of European labour? I cannot say I am. I could get very much more work, in proportion to the wages paid, out of a Chinaman.
 3645. Why cannot a European work as well as a Chinaman? I do not know. I have been working between Europeans and Chinamen myself, and it was just as much as I could do to keep up with the Chinamen. I got a sore finger and had to go away, and when I came back I found that the two Europeans were losing more and more ground every day as compared with the Chinamen.
 3646. Have you done the work yourself, as the owner of the land, which the Europeans have refused to do? I have. I have done all kinds of work.
 3647. Then you think it is not the climate that prevents Europeans from working here? It all depends on the kind of work.
 3648. I asked what labour you had employed for the growth of sugar cane, and you said you had employed white men, Chinamen, and kanakas. I desire to know whether there is anything in the cultivation of sugar cane that a white man is incapable of doing? I do not think so; but he is not willing to do it. You cannot get him to do it.
 3649. What wages have you paid to Chinamen? 15s. and 16s. a week and rations, and 24s. without rations.
 3650. What wages have you paid to kanakas? I have paid them £18 a year.
 3651. Those were time-expired boys? Yes.
 3652. Which labour do you consider most suitable for the work of the cane fields? I consider the kanaka labour by all means the most suitable, because the kanaka does work that even a Chinaman objects to do.
 3653. Have you experienced any difficulty with them in working in the cane fields? No; I have not. Of course they want looking after.
 3654. You have discussed the matter of this Commission in the association? Well, the sugar industry is a matter that is pretty often discussed, and it has been discussed outside as well.
 3655. It was understood that three out of your number should represent the whole? We did not understand perfectly at the time if the Commission was willing to take evidence from everybody, so, to cut the matter short, it was arranged that three should be deputed to give evidence for the whole.
 3656. *By Mr. King*: You can say that the farmers agree with what you have been telling us? As far as I am aware.
 3657. *By the Chairman*: Were there any other suggestions that you were desired to lay before us by which your industry on the Herbert River could be improved or assisted? I think that if the kanakas are taken away from us it will look pretty bad for us here.
 3658. That is not the point I am alluding to. Did the association empower you to make known any particular request? Yes. If the Government were willing to establish something like an experimental farm, or school, or college, or whatever it might be called, the farmers could be instructed what to grow. We are all Europeans coming into a tropical country and we really do not understand what can be grown. We have to struggle for a living to keep the pot boiling, and have very little time for experiments. In fact, up to this time none of us have made anything that I am aware of.

3659. Supposing

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3659. Supposing that an experimental farm were established, would you as a farmer avail yourself of it? By all means. I would avail myself of the experiments.
3660. And grow the tropical products that the garden would show you could be grown? Yes; if it could be shown that they could be grown with profit, so that I could make a living out of them.
3661. Was the difficulty of sending produce to market discussed by the association? Yes; that is a very serious question indeed.
3662. Can you give us any information about it? It has become a rule of late that nothing has been sent off the river, because people after sending away fruit, and fodder, and sweet potatoes have had nothing in return. The freight, commission, and landing charges in Townsville swallow up the whole concern, and consequently it has not been very common of late to send anything away.
3663. You think that is a very serious interference with the agriculture of the Herbert River? Very serious. Of course the planters have opened up communication of their own, and we have relied upon them in growing the corn. I have a good bit of corn growing this year, and if the planters would not buy it from me—and corn becomes very cheap after a wet season—I would get very little return by sending it to Townsville, after paying 10s. freight to Dungeness and another 15s. to Townsville.
3664. You are aware that the importation of Polynesians ceases at the end of 1890? I am aware of it.
3665. Has your association discussed the probable consequences of that? It is a very serious thing to discuss. I think what is uppermost in everybody's mind is that if we cannot see anything better before us we will have to leave off. I do not think sugar cane can be grown by white labour, and it is important that we should find out the way to grow something else.
3666. Then supposing that the mills should cease manufacturing sugar what would be the next best thing for the farmers to turn their attention to? In my own case the best thing I could do would be to pack up and go, because a 160-acre farm is not big enough for cattle to run on, and under the present circumstances it would not pay to grow any produce to send away.
3667. *By Mr. King:* You said just now that white men could do the work in the cane field, but they were not willing. You have been a working man yourself, have you not? I have, all my life.
3668. If you were looking for a job, and you were offered wages to trash cane, would you take the job? It all depends on the wages.
3669. What wages would you want for such a job? I would not like to trash cane for £1 or 25s. a week. I could not do it. I do not think it is a thing that my health would stand very long.
3670. You would rather hump your drum than do that? I would indeed.
3671. Or plant cane with a hoe in scrub land? That is hard work, but it is not so bad as trashing cane. It is very hard because the temperature in the cane field is very humid, and you get wet through. I have tried it and have had to go home. I could not do it.
3672. You do trash your cane? I have got to do so.
3673. It is considered advisable to do it? It is considered advisable by the company. In fact, they make it a stipulation.
3674. How much of your crop was destroyed by grub this year—how much per cent. did you lose? The grub destroyed over one-third. I had about 600 tons from thirty-five acres, when I should have had 1,000 tons, according to the way the crop looked.
3675. Do you consider this a healthy district for whites to live in? I have been living here a good many years. I dare say I would be very healthy if I had a change somewhere else, but I have to stop here. Some prefer this climate, and some say it is not healthy, but I do not think the climate is really unhealthy if a man does not work over his abilities.
3676. Is yours scrub land? Partly.
3677. Is it under plough? A good part of it is under plough now.
3678. When you get the whole put under plough could you work it with less black labour? As far as the white man's work is concerned on my place I can very well do that myself, and have always done it. I cannot work the land without some labour to clear the rows and do the trashing.
3679. A white man would be able to do more cultivation when the land is cleared and horses and machinery can be used? So long as a man can sit on a "Sulky" plough and drive along he can stand that; but he cannot stand to work with the hoe.
3680. *By Mr. Cowley:* Are the kanakas you employ free men, or are they under an engagement for three years? They are time-expired boys.
3681. Can you get as many as you want of them? At times you can, and at times you cannot.
3682. What wages do you pay them? £18 a year.
3683. Government scale of rations? Government scale of rations, but no clothing.
3684. You have forty-five acres under crop. If you could get as many kanakas as you want, would you plant more than forty-five acres? I think I might go in for more, but then the kanakas are not extraordinarily cheap. There is £18 a year, and there is the hospital fee. If you engage a boy for six months you must pay the hospital fee of £1. Then there is £5 return passage money, which a man must reckon in the wages, because he is not certain that the boy might not go home. Or he might go away to another district and you never see the £5.
3685. Your raton crop gave 16 and 13½ tons per acre. Is it not a rule to get less every year off the same field? Of course it is, but in the 13½ ton crop I had sixteen or seventeen acres of plant cane. That was growing in land that had been lying over for several years, and I stumped it and ploughed it out and put cane into it.
3686. That was almost wholly destroyed? Yes.
3687. When you got the 16 tons per acre, was that all ratons? All ratons, and it got hurt by the heavy wet when it was small.
3688. Did you find that the grubs attacked the cane on the land that was not ploughed? I had four acres of scrub land alongside ploughed land, and the grubs did not attack that part.
3689. Did they confine themselves specially to the ploughed land? Yes. There had been no crops there for several years.
3690. It had been thrown out of cultivation for several years? Yes. Four or five years.
3691. When you were ploughing the land did you see the grubs? Yes.
3692. Did you pick them out or kill them? I never took any notice of them, because it is a common thing to see grubs in the land, and I never knew them to do any harm.

3663. Have

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3693. Have you formed any idea as to how it is they did harm last year? I think it was on account of the exceptionally dry weather.
3694. Do you think that if you had labour you could grow other crops besides cane, and make them pay? That is what I do not know. I only wish that I did know what to grow.
3695. You are not wedded to cane. You have not made so much out of it that you would not try something else? I have not made anything out of cane.
3696. Do you know of anything at the present time that you could grow to pay, and use white labour exclusively? Is there anything that would pay a man and his family—you have some boys growing up? You see there is no market for anything a man might grow. For instance, fruit. Well, in the fruit season there are a lot of mangoes, but it would not pay to send them away. Tobacco has been tried. I have not tried it, but it seems to grow very well. I have also seen rice growing here. In fact, I have experimented with it, and have even tried wheat.
3697. Is there anything, of your own knowledge, that you could grow to pay—other than sugar? I do not know of anything.
3698. You alluded to the £5 return passage money. Do you think it would be a good thing if the Government would collect that money instead of allowing the employers to collect it? If the Government would collect it from the last employer I think it would be fair, because there is a lot of humbug about it. If you get a boy who has been in other parts of the colony he may give a lot of trouble. I cannot say that I have lost anything, but my neighbour, Mr. Carr, has lost £15.
3699. Have you ever obtained any kanakas from the islands? No.
3700. Why not? Because I could not afford it. The price is so high.
3701. If these men could be procured at £12 a head would it pay you to take them then? Yes, it would. Some of the new chums, I believe, are better than the old chums.
3702. How much could you afford to pay per head and find them in the Government scale of rations and clothing? I could afford to pay them the same rate of wages as is given on the plantations at the present time—£6 per annum. I would be satisfied with that.
3703. What kinds of cane do you grow here? First I planted Cheribon, and then Rappoe and Meera.
3704. Is the cane healthy? Yes.
3705. No rust? No rust.
3706. The crops last year have been free from disease, with the exception of the grubs? Yes.
3707. *By Mr. King*: Does the land in this district stand cropping well, or does it get exhausted after one or two crops? I have land on which there is splendid-looking corn, and there was splendid cane on it. It has been cropped for eight years and nothing has been returned to it.
3708. So far you think the land has not shown any sign of exhaustion? No, it is not exhausted. The land I speak of is some of the poorest I have, because it is close alongside the road.
3709. *By the Chairman*: Have you leased any of your land to Chinamen? No.
3710. Have any of your neighbours done so? One of them, but he is not growing cane.
3711. What do the Chinamen grow? Sweet potatoes and corn, but they have turned away from that, and are growing cane too, now.
3712. Are you pleased with your position as a farmer in the district? I have never been anything but a farmer, and have always been working on a farm. I cannot say that I am very prosperous, but I should like to stick to it.
3713. *By Mr. King*: Are you making money? No; certainly not.
3714. *By the Chairman*: Are you rearing your family and making a good living? Well, we have got a home, but if we get another season like the two last, I do not know how it will go.
3715. Then you think the drought of last year and this have had a very serious effect on the agricultural industry generally? I do not think it has had a serious effect upon the plant crop. I do not think it has hurt the cane much. When the land is well cultivated it seems to stand the drought very well. I do not think there is anything that will stand the same amount of drought as cane.
3716. The drought was not the only cause of your getting 13½ tons of cane per acre? Not altogether. The drought did not affect my cane. It might have affected other farmers' cane that was cut long after mine. Mine was some of the first that was cut. It was cut in August, and the drought was not so far advanced then.
3717. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did you get any cane at all off the fifteen acres attacked by the grubs? I got some off a six acre field; I got 60 tons.
3718. And now you have thrown that entirely out of cultivation? I have put some under corn.
3719. If you find that the season is favourable, will you plant with cane after you take the corn off? Decidedly.
3720. How many acres are you under contract to supply to the company? About forty acres.

CHARLES WATSON, examined:

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3721. *By the Chairman*: You are a farmer on the Herbert River? Yes.
3722. You are a member of the Herbert River Farmers' Association? Yes.
3723. You have been deputed by that association to speak in their behalf before this Commission? Yes.
3724. How long have you been a farmer on the river? About five years; but I have been a resident on the river for seventeen years.
3725. What is the extent of your holding? One hundred and sixty acres homestead.
3726. How many acres have you cultivated? I had about fifteen cultivated, but I have not got as much under cultivation now.
3727. What are you growing? I grew mostly sugar cane; but I found it would not pay me, so I knocked off.
3728. Have you no land under sugar cane now? Yes; I have about five acres.
3729. When you say that you found it would not pay you, what price were you obtaining for the cane? I was getting 11s. and delivered it at the tram line. The company allowed me 3s. to cut and deliver it, and it would not pay me. I reckoned I was only receiving about 6s. a ton for growing it. They gave me 8s. if they cut it themselves.
3730. And

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3730. And did it not pay you to grow it then? Not with the labour obtainable.
3731. What labour did you employ? I have tried Chinamen and kanakas.
3732. You have had no European labour? Yes; I have had some Europeans as well.
3733. Why did you not continue to grow cane with European labour? Because I found it the very worst labour of the lot.
3734. How was it the worst of the lot? If I set a white man to work, I had to watch him closer than a kanaka. If you sent a kanaka into the field to hoe, he would continue to do so, but as soon as I left a white man to himself he lay down and did no more until I came back.
3735. What wages were you paying the white men? £1 a week.
3736. What did you pay the Chinese? 24s., and they found themselves.
3737. You have employed some kanakas? I had kanakas for about a month. I could not get kanakas. I had not the means. You have to pay £5 a head to the inspector before you get an overtime boy, and when the time is up it is very difficult to get the £5 back again. In that way the labour becomes more expensive than white men or Chinamen.
3738. Do you think the work of the cane field is suitable for European labour? I do not think so. I have tried it myself, and I would much rather do any other bush work than go into the field.
3739. Have you tried any other production on your selection besides sugar? I have tried corn and potatoes. The potatoes grew very well, and so did the corn, but you cannot depend upon them. If you do not happen to get a suitable season the aphid gets into the corn and destroys the whole crop.
3740. Have you tried tobacco or coffee? No, I have not.
3741. Have you grown fruits? Yes, I have tried mangoes and they grew very well. I have some orange trees, but they are too young yet.
3742. *By Mr. King*: Can you not ship the mangoes to Townsville? No, because the charges are too high. By the time they got to Townsville I would get no return. It would cost me something to bring them to where I could ship them, and £2 a ton before I got them down.
3743. *By the Chairman*: Do you follow any other occupation besides farming? I take any contract work I can get, because the selection would not pay me to live on it.
3744. The produce of your farm does not keep you? No, nor my family.
3745. Was there any particular matter that the Farmers' Association desired you to bring under our notice? The kanaka labour question, and the expenses of getting kanakas. That is one of the principal things settlers have to contend against—the excessive charges and the passage money. If I want three or four boys I have not got the money to pay the inspector £5 a head. If I had and went to engage a boy the inspector would not be at home, and I would lose two or three days before I found him at home. Another thing is, that if there is the least thing the matter with a boy I have to take him to the hospital. If the inspector finds the boy lying down, even if he only has a sore finger, I will very likely be summoned. When I had the boys one was sick for a week. I gave him medicine, but the inspector told me that if I did not send him to the hospital he would summon me. I told the boy that and he went to work again.
3746. Did the association supply you with any suggestions by which the present state of affairs could be altered? If they could get the passage money reduced to a certain extent it would make a difference. Another thing is about the agreement. It would be better if we could get it signed before a justice of the peace. That would often save us two or three days. You lose a day in going to Ingham and finding the inspector, and the same when a boy is discharged. Those are the only objections to kanaka labour. It is the best labour we can get.
3747. That was the principal thing the association desired you to bring under our notice? Yes.
3748. Do you think the establishment of an experimental farm would be advantageous? I think it would be the best possible thing for the district, because the farmers are so far apart that they cannot afford to experiment. I have tried rice, and it grew well enough, but I have no means to go on and grow it in any quantity.
3749. Do you think an experimental farm would be made use of by the farmers? Yes.
3750. Would you, as a farmer, make use of it? I would, indeed. Some of the settlers have done farming at home, but had done none in the colony before they started on the river, and they want an experimental farm. The productions here are very different from those of the old country. You may get information out of papers, but it is not like seeing the produce actually growing in the field.
3751. Have not the farmers themselves discussed the growth of other articles besides sugar cane? They have, but no one has the means of trying the experiment.
3752. Supposing the importation of kanakas ceases at the end of 1890, as provided by statute, what will be the effect? I expect to see the whole country with nothing but cattle on it. I do not see how we can possibly get on without kanaka labour. I am quite certain the plantations will not exist without kanaka labour. I have seen fifty whitemen strike on Monday morning and say they would not work unless they got 5s. a week extra, and if the company were confined to white labour and that happened in the crushing season it would be the ruin of any company. Besides, the number of men that the company require they could not get in North Queensland. An estate like Victoria plantation would want 400 or 500 whitemen in crushing season, and they could not be had.
3753. *By Mr. King*: Did your cane suffer at all from the grub? No, not mine.
3754. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did your association go in for an experimental farm? Yes, but we had not the money to go on with it.
3755. How long did you keep it going? About two years.
3756. Did you work it at your own expense or did the Government assist? At our own cost.
3757. Is the farm abandoned? We still keep it going, but it is next door to abandoned. We had some coffee and tea and different plants that seemed to do very well for the time we looked after them.
3758. Have you been in the habit of buying and shipping produce, and did you make anything out of it? In the early days I used to make something out of bananas and oranges, but I lost money on it about four years ago because the charges were too high. In the north they can ship much cheaper than we can, because the big steamers go right alongside the wharf.
3759. If you had railway communication would it assist the farmers to grow other produce besides sugar? I think if we had railway communication it would assist the farmers greatly.

3760. What

- C. Watson. 3760. What do you consider was the cause of your failure in cane growing? The want of labour. I could not get kanakas, and if I got Chinamen, I paid 2*½*s. a week, and if I did not watch them I did not get half a day's work. To kanakas I had to pay 8*½*s. a week besides finding them, and then the £5 return passage was lost at the end of three or four months when the kanaka went away. The Chinaman was the cheapest man of the two even if he did not do the work. Then I have tried coolies and they were worse than any.
- 28 Jan., 1889. 3761. *By the Chairman*: Your association represents all nationalities? It does.
3762. And they were unanimous in the selection of you three? They were.
3763. What you three witness have told us are the unanimous opinions of the association? Yes.
3764. *By Mr. Couley*: What countryman are you? A Swede.
3765. You are naturalized, of course? Yes.

FRANK NEAME examined :

- F. Neame. 3766. *By the Chairman*: What experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar? I have been cultivating for about fourteen years.
- 28 Jan., 1889. 3767. What is the name of your estate? Macnade.
3768. What is its total area? 6,856 acres.
3769. How much of that is under cultivation? 915 acres—690 under cane, 15 under potatoes, and 210 fallow.
3770. How many acres of cane were crushed there last season? 500.
3771. And how much sugar was made? 725 tons.
3772. How much molasses? About 25,000 gallons. We do not keep any definite account of the molasses, but it was about that amount.
3773. What do you do with it? It very often goes to waste, and sometimes is used as manure.
3774. What is the approximate amount of capital invested in the whole estate? It is rather a difficult matter to say that. The Macnade Sugar Company had about £135,000 invested, and we have spent about another £18,000 since we have had it. When we took it over the place had very much deteriorated, the cultivation was very much out of order, and it cost us a lot of money to get it right again. I should think about £130,000 would be a fair amount.
3775. What we would like to know would be the amount which has been expended on the estate altogether, by yourselves and those who had it before you took possession of it? I should say about £130,000.
3776. Does it pay interest on that expenditure now? No.
3777. *By Mr. King*: None? No, it pays nothing. I am sorry to say it is worked at a loss.
3778. *By the Chairman*: What is the approximate annual expenditure of the estate? About £15,000.
3779. What labour is employed chiefly in working the estate? We have had last year on an average thirty Europeans, twenty Chinese, ninety kanakas, and seventy-three Malays.
3780. What wages do you pay each class of labour? Europeans on an average £50 a year, Chinese 16*½*s. a week, kanakas £3 18*½*s. 6*½*d. a year, Malays 29*½*s. 2*d.* a month.
3781. *By Mr. King*: Do you give rations in all cases? Yes.
3782. *By the Chairman*: Have you employed European labour for field work, and are Europeans able and willing to do it? I cannot recollect employing them in field work. I never found any willing to take it. I have tried to let cane cutting by contract, but never succeeded.
3783. What description of labour have you found most suitable for field work? Pacific Islanders.
3784. How much of your cultivated land is fit for the plough? The land is chiefly under plough.
3785. You do use the plough now? Yes.
3786. You have steam ploughs employed? Yes.
3787. And they give employment to European labour? Yes; they employ about five men.
3788. Do you think that bringing the land into such a state of cultivation that the plough can be used will reduce the number of black labourers that are employed? Yes; I think it would. Scrub land requires much less weeding when under the plough. When under the plough it can be worked more with horses.
3789. How many acres of land do you cultivate for each labourer employed? About three and three-quarter acres.
3790. Do you find that the kanakas employed in field work suffer in health? No.
3791. How is the health of the Europeans employed on the plantation? Generally very good.
3792. Where was the machinery of your mill manufactured? In Glasgow.
3793. What is the cost of your usual overhaul for annual repairs? I could not say. It is not kept separately.
3794. Do you keep your staff of engineers all the year round? We keep two engineers all the year round, and generally another man assisting.
3795. They are occupied solely in overhauling? In keeping the machinery in repair.
3796. What wages do you pay these engineers? One has £200 a year and the other £3 a week.
3797. And rations? Everything found.
3798. *By Mr. King*: What was the original cost of your machinery? I could not say. It was obtained at different times.
3799. Has your crop suffered from the grub at all? Slightly; not very much. About ten acres were destroyed last year.
3800. Have you any information about the best way of dealing with the grub? No; I have not.
3801. Has your crop ever suffered from any other pest besides the grub? Caterpillars. I have seen it checked by them, but not destroyed.
3802. You were not one of those who suffered from locusts some years ago? No. I was not growing cane at that time.
3803. Is there any disease in the cane? We had some suffer from rust in 1876.
3804. But since then there has been nothing? Since then it has been very free from disease.
3805. You consider this district is well suited for growing cane? Yes; very well.
3806. Does your soil show any signs of exhaustion yet? In operation we find it beneficial to manure.
3807. You do manure? Yes.

3808. Supposing

3808. Supposing that the Polynesian Act as it at present stands is carried out—that is, that the importation of kauakas ceases at the end of 1890—will that have any effect upon you? We should have to close our plantation.

3809. Would you not attempt to carry it on with white labour? No. I should simply close down as gently as I could, by planting no more cane and crushing what was left.

3810. What would you do with the land then? Let it go back to grass again and put cattle on it.

3811. Would you not attempt to cultivate some other crop? No; I should be tired of cultivating. Without coloured labour I do not think that any tropical production can be grown to advantage.

3812. You would not attempt it? No.

3813. *By Mr. Cawley*: What kind of cane suits this climate best? Rose bamboo, rappoe, meera, Mauritius yellow, and Mauritius gingham.

3814. Where do you get your plants from, and have you introduced any other varieties? We have lately introduced some varieties from China.

3815. Are they doing well? We only received them this month.

3816. Have you introduced any from the southern plantations? Not for a long time.

3817. Did you get any creole or lahiua that the Government circulated some years ago? Yes.

3818. Did they do well? I think they died out at Macnade, but I had some last year and it promised very well.

3819. Do you purchase any cane from anyone for your mill? We have some Chinese growing for us now. We will purchase next year.

3820. Have you let your land on lease? Yes.

3821. To white men or Chinese? To Chinese. I could not get any white men to take a lease.

3822. Did you try to get white men to take it? Yes; we tried for a long time.

3823. What rent per acre did you charge for your land? Five shillings an acre per annum.

3824. Is it cleared? Some cleared and some uncleared. I think the same rent is charged for both.

3825. What do you call uncleared? Virgin soil.

3826. Is any of it under the plough? No.

3827. How long have you leased this land for? Five years.

3828. What price do you give, per ton, for the cane? Eight shillings, or 10s. 9d. delivered on the main line.

3829. Are you prepared to lease more land at the present time? Yes.

3830. Can you get anyone to take it? No; I cannot.

3831. Were you compelled to let your land to Chinamen because you could not get anyone else to take it? Yes.

3832. How do the Chinamen answer—do they carry out the contract faithfully? Some are working very well and some very badly.

3833. Have you double crushing? Yes.

3834. Have you all labour-saving appliances in the mill? Yes.

3835. Have you all the different methods for extracting the juice that are known? I think so.

3836. Does your machinery consist of triple effects, vacuum pans, and press filters? Yes.

3837. Do you know of anything you have not got—any late improvement? Not that are in use in the colonies.

3838. Do you macerate? Yes.

3839. What percentage of sugar do you extract from the cane—how many tons of cane did it take last year to make a ton of sugar? Ten tons.

3840. You have employed kanaka labour for many years—do you find it suitable to your requirements? Yes.

3841. Do the kanakas give you any trouble in the matter of breaking the law or refusing to obey orders? They work very well, generally speaking.

3842. Do they quarrel with the whites much? No; not at all.

3843. Are the white men on the place antagonistic to them in any way? No; I think that they are quite willing that they should be employed.

3844. Have you as many kanakas as you require? No; not nearly.

3845. Do you make every effort to get them? Yes; we had a vessel chartered last year to bring 150 for us and another company, and the vessel only brought thirty-nine. That was just as we commenced crushing, and it threw us out very much. We had nineteen instead of seventy-five.

3846. Have you any vessels now out? We have applications in for 171 islanders by three vessels, and we have another vessel under charter.

3847. What is the cause of this? We have had great difficulty in getting islanders lately, and the price has been very high. The ship owners say it is on account of the very heavy restrictions that have been put upon them.

3848. Do you think it would be feasible for the Government to take the introduction of kanakas entirely into their own hands? I think it would be a very good thing indeed. I think the cost would be very much reduced to planters.

3849. Would it do away with all abuses? Yes; it would do away with the possibility of any abuse arising, and would ensure a much more regular supply.

3850. Have you ever heard from the kanakas any reason why they do not come here as freely as they ought? No; I have not.

3851. Have you a hospital? Yes.

3852. And a medical attendant? Yes.

3853. Have you much sickness among the labourers? Not a great deal. On an average about 6 per cent. are sick.

3854. Can you give us your death rate for the last year? No; I have not got it.

3855. Do you pay the islanders every six months? Yes.

3856. Is the Polynesian protector present when they are paid? Yes.

3857. *By the Chairman*: What is your experience in the employment of Javanese? They are very expensive.

- F. Neame. 3858. You would not desire to introduce any more? No; not at all.
3859. Some time ago you sold your estate, did you not? Yes; in 1882.
- 28 Jan., 1889. 3860. And left the colony, as you thought, not to return again? Yes.
3861. Would you kindly inform us how you came to take over the estate again? In 1886 Mr. Fanning wrote, asking whether I would lend some money on mortgage of the estate, and I thought at that time from what they had spent on it that the money would be quite safe; but in 1887 I was compelled to come out here to look after my interests, and it eventuated in my taking the place over again.
3862. Do you of your own knowledge know that, so far as the purchasers were concerned, it resulted in a heavy loss to them? Yes.
3863. Have you grown on the estate any other tropical productions but sugar? As garden specimens we have grown coffee and cinnamon, but not for commercial purposes.
3864. Were those experiments a success? Yes; the plants grew very well.
3865. Are you of opinion that they could be profitably grown? Yes; with coloured labour.
3866. Can you state the causes which in your opinion have depressed the sugar industry? High price of and difficulty in procuring coloured labour, and the low price received for sugar. In 1877 kanakas were recruited for our estate at £10 10s. per head, and the wages were limited to £6. We now pay for recruiting the same labour £28, and wages up to £12, clothes and rations all being in excess of the earlier period.
3867. Can you offer any suggestion by which the industry could be relieved of the depression? I believe that if the South Sea Islanders were recruited by the Government, and depôts established at the islands, it would ensure a more regular supply, and at considerably less cost, than at present. It would at the same time do away with the possibility of all abuses in recruiting. The uncertainty of supply at present is a great drawback, for one may make applications for hundreds and only get one-tenth of the number, and at other times perhaps the full complement. I would suggest that New Guinea may possibly be a good field for recruiting, and by placing a tax upon those leaving the country the revenue might be advantageously raised. A regular supply of cheap labour is absolutely necessary. The idea that black labour on a plantation competes with white is, I consider, as erroneous as the idea formerly held that machinery would lower the price of wages, whereas it does just the very reverse, and creates a demand for labour at higher prices. Treaties with the other Australian colonies to permit our sugar to go in free, or under more favourable duties than those levied on the production of other countries, would also greatly assist the industry. With a regular supply of cheap labour and reciprocity, I believe the industry would develop largely, and give employment to a much larger European population than at present. Further, if the small farmers could be assured of a few coloured labourers at reasonable rates I believe many more would grow cane for the mills.
3868. By Mr. Couley: At present you say all your molasses goes to waste? Yes.
3869. Could you not utilise it in any way? No; except as manure. We use some of it as manure.
3870. Do you not distill at all? No.
3871. Why not? As far as I can learn, I do not think it would pay.
3872. Would it be of assistance if the excise duty was lowered or removed altogether? I have no doubt that that would stimulate the industry.
3873. At present this loss of 35,000 gallons on 750 tons of sugar is a very considerable item? It is.
3874. Do you know of no way in which the waste product could be utilised? No; we know of no way in which it could be profitably utilised.
3875. You have heard of sacheureka being made—have you ever tried to make it? No.
3876. Have you ever tried to ship your molasses south? Yes, I did once; but it was left about on the wharf, some of the casks exploded, the molasses leaked out, and it was not a profitable speculation.
3877. By the Chairman: Can you offer any suggestions for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing? By the introduction of coloured labour, I think the northern part of the colony is capable of producing all the tea, coffee, rice, sugar, and spices required by Australia.
3878. You give that as your opinion after fourteen years' experience? Yes.
3879. By Mr. King: You sold your plantation in 1882? Yes.
3880. Part of the price remaining on mortgage? I was paid cash.
3881. Then you afterwards advanced something on mortgage? Yes.
3882. What was the amount of the mortgage? £35,000.
3883. And that was the amount for which the purchasers gave you back the plantation? Yes.
3884. Did they in the meantime expend any money upon it? About £50,000.
3885. Did they increase the machinery? They increased the machinery, and the area under cultivation.
3886. How many years did they have it? Between four and five years.
3887. Then at that rate they must have lost about £20,000 a year? Yes.
3888. By Mr. Couley: Can you tell us of your own knowledge the amount that was lost from experimenting in introducing labour? No; I cannot.
3889. Do you know that they did lose heavily on that? Yes.
3890. What was the labour that they introduced? Javanese and Cingalese.
3891. You are not aware that they introduced a large number of Chinese? I think I have heard that they did.
3892. How do you manage with deceased islanders' wages? They are paid to the inspector.
3893. Have you ever applied for them to be paid to the relatives of the deceased? I applied lately in one instance, but there has been no result yet.
3894. Has sufficient time lapsed for there to be a result? No; I think not.
3895. You say you cannot possibly grow cane without the assistance of black labour—now if you could employ as many islanders as you required, would it pay you to grow sugar at the present price? No; I do not think it would. The prices for the last three months have been better. At the prices that are ruling just at present it would, but not at the prices that were averaged in 1887-8.
3896. Would it pay on an average of £15 or £16 a ton if you could get a sufficient supply of South Sea Island labour to cultivate as much land as you required? I could hardly say. It would pay a very small interest at that price.
3897. What is the capacity of your mill if worked to its full extent? About 150 tons of cane a day.
3898. That would be 15 tons of sugar? Yes.
3899. Were

3899. Were you able to keep the mill supplied with cane at that rate last year? No; we only averaged 100 tons a day. F. Neame.
3900. What was the reason of that? Shortness of labour. We could not get sufficient cane supplied to 28 Jan., 1889. the mill.
3901. *By Mr. King*: That would increase the cost of manufacture? Very much so.
3902. *By Mr. Cowley*: You have not only suffered from a want of cane, but you have also suffered from being unable to get that cane to the mill in sufficient quantity to keep the mill profitably employed? Yes.
3903. How many acres of land are there that you could let to white farmers? A good many hundred acres.
3904. Are you willing to lease it? Yes.
3905. What length of lease would you give to a good man? Five or seven years. Before my evidence closes I might suggest that the wages of a kanaka when sick and in the hospital should be allowed to be deducted by the employers and go towards the hospital fund.
3906. *By Mr. King*: If a kanaka is sent to gaol has his employer to continue his wages during the time he is in prison? I believe so.
3907. *By the Chairman*: You said just now that the annual cost of working the estate is £15,000? Yes.
3908. The whole of that money is expended in the district? The larger portion of it.
3909. At present the estate is being worked at a loss? Yes.
3910. Then at present there is absolutely expended in working the estate more than you receive in the produce of the estate? Yes.
3911. Where it is possible for you to employ European labour you generally do so? Yes.

MR. ARTHUR NEAME'S STATEMENT.

MR. ARTHUR NEAME, who was unable to attend before the Commission in consequence of a severe accident, hauded in the following statement:—

"I consider the true cause of the depression in the sugar industry to be the uncertain and insufficient supply of labour. Sugar at the present prices would give a good return on capital invested could the planters rely on getting the labour to put a sufficient area under cultivation, maintain it in good cultivation, and in course of time gather the crop. As at present, the labourers may be on the plantation to plant the crop, their time expires before the crop can be taken off, and a fresh supply of labour cannot be procured in time to take their place.

"The labour is also very expensive. The passage money for each islander is £29, including Government fees, this sum to be paid in cash before a day's work is done, and wages have to be paid whether the men work or not. This price makes it quite prohibitory for the small selector to grow cane, as he cannot do all the work himself and he cannot afford to pay for the labour to assist him.

"On all these northern plantations a large supply of labour is of necessity maintained all the year round than in other sugar-producing countries, there being no spare labour in the district available that can be drawn upon in busy times.

"To relieve the sugar industry of the depression under which it labours, I would suggest that the Government take into their own hands the work of procuring and distributing the coloured labour (the planters of course paying all expenses); that the labourers should be received at some central depot, to which all applications should be sent, and from whence the labour required should be forwarded to the applicants; and as soon as the time of any labourers expired they should at once be returned to the depot for transmission to their islands.

"This question of labour is most pressing, as, should no remedy be found, I can see nothing to hinder all the northern coast lands reverting to small cattle stations with a minimum of population.

"The suggestion I would offer for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing is:

"To introduce a large supply of coloured labour entirely for field work, at rates not much in excess of those paid in other countries. In the course of a few years I then believe that the northern coast lands would be amongst the most prosperous in the world; a large white population would in time get settled on the land, as is self-evident at the present time, in spite of all difficulties, and would probably, when the next generation grew up, be able to dispense entirely with coloured labour; but if the coloured labour is stopped or checked at the present time, the white population will gradually disappear till there are hardly any left; even now there are a number of deserted lands.

"If a supply of labour could always be relied upon, I feel convinced that in a short time most of the lands in this district would be under cultivation as far as the coast range. The agricultural labourers who come into the colony, and many others, would, as soon as they had saved a few pounds, either buy or lease land and grow sugar cane for the mills to crush. Also rice, arrowroot, cassava (tapioca), cinnamon, and coffee, all of which grow to perfection in this district, as also most tropical fruits and many kinds of fibre. I have had numerous applications from Europeans to lease land, but they have invariably wanted me to assist them with labour which I have been unable to agree to."

TUESDAY, 29 JANUARY, 1889.

HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.

(At Ripple Creek.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.
H. E. KING, Esq.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

ROBERT MITCHELL BOYD examined:

3912. *By the Chairman*: Are you a partner in the Ripple Creek plantation? I am.
3913. What experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar? Twenty years' experience—since 1869. R. M. Boyd.
3914. Have you grown any other tropical produce? No; not with a view of finding a market.
3915. What is the name of this estate? Ripple Creek. 29 Jan., 1889.

3916. What

- R. M. Boyd. 3916. What is the total area of it? 1,650 acres.
 3917. How much of it is under cultivation? 800 acres.
 29 Jan., 1889. 3918. Under sugar cane? Under sugar cane, 720 acres.
 3919. How many acres of cane were crushed last season? 620.
 3920. And how much sugar was made? 1,025 tons.
 3921. How much molasses? 38,000 gallons.
 3922. What do you do with it? Throw it away.
 3923. What amount of capital is invested in this estate? £85,000.
 3924. What rate of interest does the estate return on that amount of capital? Nothing.
 3925. What is the annual working expenditure? The expenditure for three years was £60,095 from June, 1885, to September, 1888.
 3926. *By Mr. King*: An annual expenditure of £20,030? Yes.
 3927. *By the Chairman*: That amount represents the capital expended on the estate in working expenses? That is what I have actually expended since 1885.
 3928. What have been the receipts during that period? £49,164, showing a total loss of £10,631 in three years.
 3929. Then during those three years there was no interest whatever, you say, on the capital invested? Not a penny either on capital, wear and tear, or anything else.
 3930. What labour is employed in this mill, specifying the number of Europeans, kanakas, Chinese, and Javanese? 50 Europeans, 71 Chinese, 36 Malays, 6 overtime kanakas, 116 kanakas under agreement; total, 229 coloured labourers.
 3931. What wages are paid to each class of labour? Average wages of white men with rations, valued at 6s., £2 4s. 4d. a week; Chinese, £1 1s. 9d. per week; Malays, 15s. 10d. per week; overtime kanakas, 14s.; and agreement boys, 17s. 2½d. That is the amount paid to the kanakas under agreement, including proportion of cost of introduction, return passage, and all other expenses under the Act.
 3932. What description of labour is found most suitable for field work? The kanaka is as good as anybody as far as I have learned here.
 3933. Have you ever employed European labour for field work? Not for hoe work.
 3934. Have you ever employed European labour to do what the kanakas are doing? Not in Queensland.
 3935. Are you of opinion from your experience that the European can do work that the kanaka does now? He certainly can not—not for twelve months. They can do it for a few weeks, but to follow it up as a living they cannot.
 3936. Is much of your land under cultivation by plough? About 400 acres, and all will be directly.
 3937. When your land is perfectly free from stumps would not Europeans working horses and machinery be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour? Not more than we are doing at present.
 3938. *By Mr. Coudley*: You mean that the proportion will not be altered? The proportion will not be altered. Whitemen can do the horse work and machinery work but not anything else.
 3939. *By Mr. King*: When the ground is fully under cultivation, you will be able to do much work that you now do with the hoe, with horses? But I shall have more hoe work to do.
 3940. *By the Chairman*: How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each coloured labourer employed? About three acres at present.
 3941. Do the blacks employed in the field work suffer in health? I think they suffer more from laziness than anything else.
 3942. *By Mr. King*: You do not find it affects their health to work in the field? I do not think so. As a rule the climate suits them very well. What makes them suffer in health is bad Government regulations, too much clothes, and the wrong sort of food. There is no doubt about that. We are bound to give them so much meat to eat whether they are used to it or not.
 3943. Are the Europeans affected by the plantation work? I do not think so, so far as working in the open is concerned. They stand the class of work that they do.
 3944. *By Mr. King*: At present the district is a fairly healthy one for Europeans? Fairly healthy, at the work in which they are engaged.
 3945. *By the Chairman*: Were these Malays indentured by yourself, or did you hire them in the colony? Some were indentured by myself, and some I picked up.
 3946. What is your experience of them? If you can get the right class of Malay—the real Malay coolie—he would do very well for the country, but if they are got from Singapore or Batavia they are simply no good. They are simply a trouble and a nuisance, and are no good, unless they are brought in under proper regulations.
 3947. You are aware that, according to the existing statute, the importation of Polynesians ceases at the end of 1890? Yes, I believe it does.
 3948. What effect will that have upon the operations of this plantation? If we cannot get coloured labour the plantation must just shut up. If we cannot get suitable labour, that is to say, labour suited to the climate, we must close.
 3949. What is the cost of the machinery in your mill? £30,107.
 3950. Where was it manufactured? Glasgow.
 3951. Do you make an annual overhaul for repairs? Yes.
 3952. Can you give us the average cost of that? In 1886, £1,557; in 1887, £1,533.
 3953. That is for putting the machinery in order for crushing? Yes.
 3954. That is the whole cost of putting the mill in order? Yes.
 3955. *By Mr. King*: Has your cane suffered from any diseases or vermin? We lost about 10 per cent. last year from grub, and we lost one season, I should say, about 10 or 12 per cent. from rust.
 3956. You have had no sign of rust lately? Not the last three years. I ploughed one planting out and we never planted it again.
 3957. What variety was it that rusted? Ribbon cane.
 3958. *By Mr. Coudley*: Big or small ribbon? Big ribbon.
 3959. *By Mr. King*: What are the average wages paid to white labour outside of sugar planting in this district? Handy men get 6s. a day and find themselves.
 3960. What does the Divisional Board give? From 6s. to 7s. There is a man working on this side who gets 7s. a day and finds himself. Maintenance men get from 6s. to 8s.
 3961. What

3951. What is the cost per acre of felling and burning scrub? Taking one season with another, I should say £10 an acre. A great deal depends upon the season. R. M. Boyd.
3962. What would be the cost of stumping it and making it fit for the plough? £20 to £40. I never saw scrub land stumped straight out. 29 Jan., 1889.
3963. What is the cost of preparing forest land for planting? Our land cost on an average over £25 an acre; that is, to make it ready for planting.
3964. Is the forest land here suitable for agriculture? Yes.
3965. Do you consider it equal to the scrub? No.
3966. Does the forest land soon become exhausted? Not heavily timbered land. It stands pretty well, but I have only had six years' experience.
3967. Has any of your land shown signs of being exhausted? Yes; the whole of it. It all deteriorates after one crop.
3968. *By Mr. Cowley:* You mean one planting? Yes; in five years.
3969. *By Mr. King:* Do you manure? I commenced this year, and can give no results.
3970. What manure do you use? The same as the Colonial Sugar Company. We sent forth three different varieties, and I have one coming from England. I am experimentalising this year.
3971. You are trying several kinds of chemical manures? I am trying three sorts, and getting another from England.
3972. You said just now that the working expenses for the last three years have averaged £20,000 a year. Has that been spent in the district—the whole or the greater part of it? I believe every penny of it: with the exception of a few thousand pounds for goods imported from Sydney, the whole has been paid out through the plantation cheque book.
3973. Have you had any experience in distilling? Yes.
3974. Would it not pay to turn your molasses into rum? No.
3975. Why not? The cost of freight, casks, cooperage, carriage, and excise would prevent it; besides which it would be impossible to work under the hours and rules of the Excise Department in an outside country like this. It simply could not be done.
3976. Could you not dispose of your molasses to some of the Brisbane distillers? No; they will not take it away as a gift, and pay the cost. Even if 6d. a gallon could be got for it in Brisbane, the whole of that amount, if not more, would be entirely swallowed up in freights, packages, and charges.
3977. *By Mr. Cowley:* Have you had experience of growing sugar in New South Wales? Yes; ten years' experience.
3978. On what rivers were you? Port Macquarrie, the Maclay, and Clarence Rivers.
3979. Did you ever grow cane for a factory? Yes.
3980. What labour did you use? White labour.
3981. Did you make it a success—was it profitable? I lost every sixpence I had in the world, and took a billet with £15 in my pocket after the experiment.
3982. How does the yield per acre down there compare with the yield per acre in Queensland? I have known it on the Clarence average 42 tons an acre for a two-year old crop. That was an exceptional crop.
3983. What area would that comprise? Over 1,300 acres.
3984. What price per ton was paid for the cane? 10s. on the field.
3985. To the grower? To the grower.
3986. What labour was used in growing the cane? Mostly white labour.
3987. Can you tell us the wages paid, including rations? They varied from 12s. to 18s. a week with rations. The labourer lived as one of the family.
3988. You employ fifty Europeans on this plantation directly; how many do you employ indirectly? I should say that £19,000 out of £20,000 a year goes to the white population.
3989. The bulk of the money spent here goes in some form or other to the white inhabitants? Yes; not 5 per cent. gets away from them.
3990. Have you ever had cane cut by white labour—contract or otherwise? No.
3991. Do your white ploughmen stay long with you, as a rule? No; the ploughmen do not, as a rule.
3992. Do you readily find those men in the district, or have you to import them from outside? In nine cases out of ten we get them from Townsville.
3993. Do you pay their passages up here? Yes.
3994. And by continually losing the men you add to the cost of working the plantation? Yes; it means nearly £1 apiece to every man every three months.
3995. You have £85,000 of capital sunk in this estate.—I wish to know whether that is actually cash sunk, or includes interest from the date of operations? It is accumulated interest for four years on an overdraft of £50,000. This overdraft has gone from nothing to £50,000.
3996. The interest has been added annually? Yes; interest is being charged at the rate of 3 per cent.
3997. What cane do you grow here for your crop? Big yellow, lillian green, rappoc, meera, and creole.
3998. Which do you find the best variety? I like the big yellow, but I am told it is liable to disease.
3999. Is creole the cane that was distributed by the Government some years ago? Yes.
4000. How has that done with you? I do not think it is worth planting; it is too light a crop.
4001. Then it does not return the same yield as you were led to believe? No.
4002. Have you any of the lillian cane distributed by the Government? I do not think so.
4003. You suffered from grubs last year.—Did you try to remedy that in any way? I ploughed the cane out of the fields.
4004. Has that destroyed the grub? We cannot tell till next year. The grubs turn to beetles, and there are millions of beetles. If they come back to deposit their eggs, and those eggs come to maturity, there will not be a stick of cane next year.
4005. You are not in a position to say whether cultivation is beneficial? No. I believe the birds have destroyed millions of grubs—the kite and magpie lark.
4006. Have you taken any steps to change your plants by introducing from other districts? I have a few varieties sent from the Clarence.
4007. The bulk of your plants are of your own growing? I exchange with my neighbours.
4008. Do you get better crops by a change of plants? I do not know that I do. It depends upon the season. I have no doubt it is beneficial. 4009. Are

- R. M. Boyd. 4009. Are you purchasing cane from anyone? I am purchasing all the cane I can buy. I am under agreement for fifty acres at present.
- 29 Jan. 1889. 4010. Who grows the fifty acres? Chinamen.
4011. Do you get all you want, or can you take more? I could take more.
4012. Have you made any efforts to lease your land to white men? Yes; I have advertised the property three times.
4013. And how many white men have you obtained? None. I have only had two inquiries out of three advertisements.
4014. What was the character of the land that you offered to white growers? I offered to lease the whole property in farms.
4015. Cleared land? Yes; cleared land under cane.
4016. What was the annual rent you asked? £1 an acre for the cleared land.
4017. By cleared land do you mean land actually under plough? Under cane itself. Cane growing on the land.
4018. Did it include the crop? The crop wanted renewing. I took 1,170 tons of cane off the crop that I offered to give in with the lease.
4019. You have been unsuccessful in obtaining any white growers? We could not get a man to come on at all.
4020. What price did you offer for the cane? When we first advertised to lease farms we offered 10s. a ton.
4021. In the field or cut? Standing.
4022. That is the same price as given in New South Wales? Yes.
4023. And since then? Since the fall in price of sugar we have offered 8s.
4024. Have you double crushing in your mill? Yes.
4025. And do you macerate the cane? Yes.
4026. Is your machinery of the best description known for the manipulation of sugar cane? I do not know of a single improvement that could be made. Not one. I followed the Colonial Sugar Company. Our machinery is a duplicate of theirs on a smaller scale.
4027. You are an old manager of theirs? I was in their employ for ten years, and managing four years.
4028. Do you strive to avoid all waste in your mill? Yes.
4029. Can you tell us how many tons of cane it took to make a ton of sugar in your factory last year? Ten tons making white sugar. I have never done it before under 12 tons. Two seasons it has taken 12 tons, two seasons it has taken us 14 tons, and this season it has taken 10 tons.
4030. What system are you adopting for the manufacture of your sugar? When I am making white sugar I use Despesi's process.
4031. Are your South Sea Islanders easily managed? They are no trouble, so long as they are allowed to do what they like.
4032. I mean, do you have any trouble with them? Yes.
4033. What does that arise from? Being too much pampered by the inspector and grog.
4034. How do they obtain the grog? They buy it. They can get as much as they like. They have no difficulty at all in getting it.
4035. Have you taken any steps to prevent this? Yes; we have complained to the inspector three or four times. We have complained to the police half a dozen times. We have informed the magistrate. We have informed and got convictions in two or three cases ourselves, but we have had very little assistance from the police, as they say that prosecutions should be undertaken by the Excise Department.
4036. Does this seriously affect the labour question? I reckon it is a loss of 5 per cent. on my kanaka labour.
4037. Do your South Sea Islanders and white labourers ever quarrel? No; we have never had a serious row on the plantation.
4038. Do the white men object to the employment of kauakas? No; there is no objection.
4039. Are you full-banded at the present time? No; and never have been since I have been on the plantation.
4040. What steps do you take to obtain islanders? We write to all the known owners of labour ships, and very often put advertisements in the papers asking for charters.
4041. Do your ships come with full complements, as a rule? I have only had one ship with a full complement in six years.
4042. Can you give us any reason for that? Simply, I believe, because they cannot get the kanakas.
4043. What is the cost of the passage money at the present time, including all charges? To land them on the plantations they cost from £27 to £30. I have three charters out at £27.
4044. Does that include capitation? Yes; that includes the £3 capitation and £24 to the shipper.
4045. Can you suggest any idea by which kanakas can be more easily obtained? I suggest that the Government take the labour question in hand. There would be a great deal more satisfaction given. We never know now when we can get men. We make a charter before a ship is in port, and perhaps she never gets there. If she does and goes out again, perhaps she never comes back. In the meantime our hands are tied from making other charters.
4046. Would you suggest that the Government introduce islanders on a somewhat similar plan to the introduction of white immigrants? I suggest that the Government introduce the labour and allot it to the planters according to application, and return it to the islands; the planters, of course, paying the expenses.
4047. By Mr. King: What was the average crop of cane per acre last year? 16½ tons.
4048. What is the capacity of your mill? It can make 1,500 tons of sugar, working a single shift.
4049. How many tons of cane would you require per day? 140 tons.
4050. Were you able to keep the mill working with that last season? No. Twice during the season we had to stop to take our labour from the factory into the field to keep the weeds down. We wanted another fifty men on the plantation.
4051. Then your working is more expensive in consequence of not having sufficient labour to work the mill to its full capacity? Yes; I am losing interest on the machinery, and the same management and supervision would do double the work.
4052. Do

R. M. Boyd.

29 Jan., 1889.

4052. Do you employ a steam plough? I had steam ploughing done last year by contract.
4053. To whom does the plough belong? A man named Brims. He bought the steam plant, and takes contracts for ploughing.
4054. How many horse ploughs do you employ? I am working at present nineteen teams.
4055. What number of horses do you employ? Seventy-four, and two teams of bullocks.
4056. Are all your horse and bullock drivers whites? Yes.
4057. What length of tramway have you got? Six miles.
4058. Do you work it with horse power? Yes.
4059. *By the Chairman*: How long have you been on the Herbert River? I came here in 1882.
4060. Of course you are aware that the depression in the sugar industry commenced in the year 1883? Yes; 1883-4.
4061. Have you any personal knowledge of the loss sustained by planters in this district during the last three or four years in consequence of the depression? Yes; I have a personal knowledge of one estate losing over £100,000.
4062. What became of the plantation? It was sold.
4063. Did it realise anything like its proper value? It was offered to me for £20,000.
4064. Were there more than one plantation in the same position? Yes; another—Hamligh.
4065. What was the loss sustained on that one? I believe £100,000. Of course I cannot state the exact amount.
4066. Was it sold? I believe so.
4067. What did it realise? £12,500.
4068. Then throughout the district there has been a general depression for some years past? I believe one firm has lost £300,000 on the Herbert River since 1882.
4069. What tropical productions other than sugar can be grown in this district? Tobacco, coffee, dahl, cocoa, vanilla, cotton. All these I have grown in my own garden, and seen them growing. No doubt all spices will grow, and anything that will grow in other tropical countries.
4070. What labour would be required to render the growth of these articles profitable? The same labour that is used in other countries where they are grown at a profit at present.
4071. You do not think that Europeans can grow these articles at a profit without having some other labour than their own? They certainly cannot. It is simply impossible.
4072. Have you grown any of these tropical productions on the Herbert River? I have grown all I mentioned, but not for a market.
4073. Have you tried coffee as an experiment? Yes.
4074. And the result of your experiment has been to satisfy you that the district is well suited to grow all the articles that you have enumerated? Yes; and very likely a great many more.
4075. Can you state the causes which, in your opinion, have led to the depression in the sugar industry? Increased cost of labour, and fall in value of sugar.
4076. Can you offer any suggestions by which the industry can be relieved of the depression? The only thing I can suggest is to put us on the same footing as other people. The cause of depression is a fall in the market all over the world of about £10 a ton, and the production in Queensland exceeding the consumption, thereby losing the benefit of the import duty to the planters, a further sum of £5 a ton has been lost to them. We are unable to compete with the growers in New South Wales as they still have the benefit of £5 duty, their production being less than their consumption. The cost of sending our produce into the market by steamer is 10s. per ton in excess of what is paid by the New South Wales planters. The European labour in New South Wales costs less to the farmer than the Chinese labour here, which labour we are bound to employ, not being able to obtain any other. A great deal of the cane grown in New South Wales is cultivated by women and children. Here we have to keep men employed at unprofitable work for the sake of having them at hand when absolutely required, whilst in New South Wales a man is only employed so long as there is profitable work for him to do. The sugar industry in other parts of the world is barely paying expenses. The planters in Queensland, to compete and pay expenses must be placed on the same footing in regard to the cost of manufacture, which would mean a saving of nearly £8,000 a year to this estate if the same labour was employed as is used in Mauritius and the West Indies. If kanakas are allowed to be employed at their present cost I do not see that planters would be in a position to compete with other countries that employ cheaper labour unless the planters are assisted by a bonus or protection. I would suggest that on account of the unsatisfactory working of the Polynesian Act and the alleged abuses, also on account of the increased cost since 1882, the Government should take the labour question entirely into their own hands, and introduce suitable labour. I would further suggest that persons engaged in the cultivation of tropical produce, to compete against others who employ cheap labour, should be registered and allowed to employ cheap labour in proportion to the area under cultivation, and the other half of the labour might be done by Europeans and machinery. It costs in Queensland £70,000 to form an estate, and erect machinery and working plant capable of producing 1,000 tons of sugar per annum. To that must be added one year's working expenses—say £20,000—and on this expenditure capitalists should reasonably expect to receive, including wear and tear of machinery and depreciation, not less than 10 per cent.—say £9,000 a year. No doubt, in view of the present depression in trade, if they could get 5 per cent., or even 4 per cent., they might be induced to carry on with the prospect of better times coming. The United States Government have given manufacturers of cane sugar a bonus of 1 cent per lb, and a reciprocity treaty with New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia would give us protection nearly equal to the same amount of bonus given by the United States. By allowing the use of reliable labour, and endeavouring to secure a reciprocity treaty, such as I mention, the planters might be able to compete on a fair footing with other tropical countries. If the sugar industry in Queensland can be made a profitable undertaking, the production might be increased until the export amounted to 100,000 tons. It is estimated that the Johnstone River could nearly export that amount. That would mean an expenditure of capital of £7,000,000, and a floating capital of £2,000,000 sterling. I may add that I require 250 kanakas to work this plantation, independent of the white labour, which would be increased, supposing I could obtain that number. In 1882-3 these kanakas would have cost me 11s. 10d. per week, or £7,691 13s. 4d. for the year. At the present time the 250

kanakas

R. M. Boyd. 4076. kanakas would cost me 15s. 0½d. per week, or £9,777 1s. 8d. per annum. The present cost of all coloured labour to the owners of the plantation at present is 17s. 2½d. per head per week. The increased expense of labour, through being unable to obtain a proper complement of kanakas, even at present rates, makes a loss on a ton of sugar of £1 8s. 2d., and the increased expense of labour, through extra Government expenses and the increased wages and passage money of kanakas since 1882-3, makes a difference on a ton of sugar of £2 1s. 8½d. If labour could be obtained as it is in some of the other sugar-growing countries, including even countries where beet-root sugar is made, it would make a difference to the planter on a ton of sugar of £5 6s. 8½d.

29 Jan., 1889. 4077. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say that the country is adapted for the growth of tobacco. Did anyone ever attempt to grow it? Yes; a neighbour of mine grew it.

4078. Had he much under crop? I believe twenty or thirty acres.

4079. Did he get good crops? He told me that the tobacco grew splendidly.

4080. Was he an experienced tobacco grower? Yes.

4081. Do you know the cause of his failure? Yes; he could not get labour.

4082. Has he abandoned the place? Yes; I believe he lost some £7,000 or £8,000.

4083. Have the islanders ever complained to you of any treatment which prevented them coming here in numbers? No; never.

4084. Owing to your partners being large consumers of sugar, have you not had large advantages over other growers? I reckon I have.

4085. Had it not been for those advantages would your debt not have been materially increased? Yes; to the extent of nearly £1 a ton on the sugar manufactured. In fact, I have paid no commission on two-thirds of my produce since I have been here. My partners have sold it free of commission.

4086. You have only paid 3 percent. on your portion of the overdraft? Yes; on my portion of the estate.

4087. Do you know of any crop that could be grown on this river to pay solely by white labour? No; certainly not.

4088. Do you know whether South Sea Islanders, at the expiration of their agreement, ever take much money home? I am sure they do not. They do not average £1 apiece.

4089. Do the Malays or Chinese take any away? Yes; they both do. They do not go home until they have saved money.

4090. Then in that respect you consider that the employment of South Sea Islanders is much more beneficial to the country? Undoubtedly. They take nothing away, and besides they come back again I have forty-five overtime boys now. Out of 120 boys forty-five have been working in the colony for a period of three to ten years, and are drawing wages from £18 to £25 a year, all of which they spend in the country.

4091. *By the Chairman*: Do you know whether the vine has been grown in this district? It will not grow to any perfection. I have an Isabella which has been struggling for five years, and I have had four bunches in five years. I am not prepared to say that vines will not grow somewhere in the district.

4092. Do you know whether the nutmeg is growing here? Yes; it is growing wild.

4093. And if cultivated, it could be grown profitably? The fruit will come to perfection here.

WEDNESDAY, 30 JANUARY, 1889.

HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.

(At Gairloch.)

PRESENT :

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

LEWIS JESSE COWLEY examined :

L. J. Cowley. 4094. *By the Chairman*: How long have you been residing on the Herbert River? Eleven years.

4095. How many years were you manager of Gairloch Plantation? Two years.

30 Jan., 1889. 4096. Were you manager of any other one? I was sub-manager of Haulleigh for five years.

4097. Who were the original owners of Gairloch? Fanning, Nankivel, and Co.

4098. Did they take up the land? No; they bought it. Originally there were three or four owners.

4099. The firm of Fanning, Nankivel and Co. bought up the land and consolidated it into Gairloch? Yes.

4100. Do you of your own knowledge know the cost of the machinery now in the mill? About £10,000; I could not say exactly.

4101. *By Mr. King*: What is the total area of the estate? 4,600 acres, about.

4102. *By the Chairman*: What area was under cane? 1,200 acres.

4103. Did you continue to manage the plantation up to the time that Fanning, Nankivel, and Co. sold it? Yes.

4104. What labour was employed during the time you were manager here? South Sea Islanders, Javanese, Chinese, and Europeans.

4105. How many tons of sugar were generally turned out during the crushing season? I only crushed one season, and we got nearly 900 tons.

4106. Did it ever exceed 900 tons? No.

4107. What is the capacity of the mill? If kept going regularly I believe it could make 2,000 tons in the season.

4108. *By Mr. Cowley*: That is by single shift? Yes; a single shift.

4109. *By*

4109. *By the Chairman* : Have you any idea of the total amount of capital which was invested in the whole plantation by the firm of Fanning, Nankivel, and Co.? I only have an idea, it was over £120,000. L. J. Cowley.
30 Jan., 1889.
4110. Was the plantation a success under Fanning, Nankivel, and Co? Well, no.
4111. *By Mr. King* : Did it pay its working expenses? No; it did not.
4112. *By the Chairman* : Did the company finally dispose of it? Yes.
4113. Do you know how much they got for it? About £21,000. It was offered at auction in Melbourne and they could not sell it by auction. Afterwards they disposed of it to different people. 500 acres were sold to Boyd; horses, plant, and tools to the Colonial Sugar Company; land and buildings to another company. They realized altogether about £21,000.
4114. What is your opinion was the cause of the failure of the plantation to pay? It was owing principally to the difficulty in getting reliable labour.
4115. Had not the low price of sugar anything to do with it? Certainly it had something to do with it; but I believe if we had had reliable and cheap labour we could have paid working expenses and interest.
4116. From your experience on the Herbert River during the eleven years that you have been here, is it your opinion that the district can grow sugar profitably? Yes, it is.
4117. Under the conditions you have named? Yes.
4118. What was the average yearly expenditure during the time you were manager of Gairloch? I have before me the monthly returns which were made out on the first of every month and forwarded to the head office in Melbourne. These returns show a local expenditure of sometimes £2,600 per month; others £2,000 per month; and others £1,500 per month; showing a general average expenditure of from £25,000 to £27,000 per annum, and the whole of that money was spent in the colony.
4119. You say you have employed Javanese, Chinese, and kanakas—what was the cost of the Javanese labour? The cost of introduction was £24 per head.
4120. And what wages did you pay them? Eight dollars a month. That is about 25s. a month.
4121. You provided house and board? Yes.
4122. Was the employment of Javanese a success? No.
4123. If you were manager of a plantation again would you recommend the employment of such labour? No.
4124. What wages were you paying kanakas? From £6 to £15 a year.
4125. Speaking from your knowledge, as manager, what do you consider the best labour for the cane-field? Kanaka labour, decidedly.
4126. How many Europeans were employed on the estate when you were manager? Sixty-four.
4127. What was the average rate of wages paid to them? Labouring men got £1 a week. Skilled labour of course varied.
4128. What was the highest rate of wages paid to skilled labour? £4 per week.
4129. Did that include rations? We had to supply rations and a house. I may state that I advertised for white men to contract to cut and load cane, and I got three gangs to sign a contract; but after working at it a week, two of the gangs threw it up, and the third kept at it for some time, until the ganger got Chinese labour.
4130. *By Mr. King* : What price per acre were you giving? 2s. 6d. a ton cut and loaded in the drays, and the provision was that I should give them all good standing up cane, and not less than 30 tons per acre, which I had at that time.
4131. *By the Chairman* : How many horses were employed on the plantation at that time? About 120.
4132. Did you grow the horse feed or purchase it? We purchased it.
4133. From the local farmers? All that we could get.
4134. Then the closing of the mill by Fanning, Nankivel and Co. was a serious loss to the farmers of the district? Decidedly.
4135. *By Mr. King* : How did you feed your black labourers? We gave them rations according to the Government scale.
4136. Did you grow the sweet potatoes yourself? We used to buy most of them. We grew a few ourselves.
4137. *By the Chairman* : Speaking generally, from your experience as sub-manager for five years and manager for two and a-half years on Gairloch plantation, do you consider that European labour can be employed profitably in the cane field to do the work that kanakas are now doing? I do not.
4138. Do you think that such work is injurious to the health of Europeans? No.
4139. Then why do you think they are not physically capable of doing the work that a kanaka can do? I think they are physically capable of doing it, but they require such high wages that we cannot afford them.
4140. *By Mr. King* : Will white men undertake to trash cane? No, they will not. I tried very hard to get any labour I possibly could, and I could not get them to go into the cane fields at all.
4141. Were the white men who threw up the contract for cutting cane dissatisfied with the price? They said the work was too hard.
4142. They did not want to raise the price? No. I must state that two of the head men were men who had cut cane on the Clarence River for the Colonial Sugar Company, and understood all about it.
4143. They found they could not do it up here? It happened to be a very hot season, and they would not work.
4144. *By the Chairman* : Have your white labourers ever objected to working with the kanakas? Never.
4145. They do not object to their being employed in the cane fields? Not at all.
4146. No white labourer has ever refused to work for you because you employed kanakas? No.
4147. Were the whole of the supplies required for the working of the plantation locally purchased? No; they were sent principally from Melbourne.
4148. When you say that £25,000 to £27,000 was expended annually in the colony, you do not include what you received from Melbourne? Not all. Some of it is included, but very little.
4149. *By Mr. King* : How much of your land was under the plough? The whole, with the exception of 250 acres.
4150. Have you used the steam plough on this estate? Yes.
4151. Did you find it to answer well? Very well, indeed.
4152. Did

L. J. Cowley. 4152. Did the steam plough belong to the estate? Yes.

4153. Is it on the estate still? Yes.

30 Jan., 1889. 4154. The estate now rents part of its land to the Colonial Sugar Company? Yes. Of course it does not belong to Fanning, Nankivel, and Co. now, but the Colonial Sugar Company have rented about 1,000 acres.

4155. Was that 1,000 acres planted with cane when they rented it? Some of it was.

4156. How much? About 450 acres was planted, but they ploughed out most of it.

4157. What rent do they pay for it? £100 a year.

4158. Did you ever make an attempt to get farmers to rent the land and grow cane for the mill? Not on Gairloch, but when I was sub-manager of Hamleigh we tried to get farmers to grow cane for us, and we only succeeded in getting one man.

4159. What terms did you offer them? I think it was 10s. a ton for 10 per cent. density, and a shilling each way.

4160. It was to be cut by the company? It was optional. We gave them 2s. 6d. if they cut and loaded it, or we would cut it ourselves. That is, they would get 12s. 6d. a ton if they grew it and cut and loaded it.

4161. What rent were they to pay for the land? 5s. an acre per annum.

4162. Was that cleared land? Yes.

4163. Under cultivation? No; plain land.

4164. Why would the farmers not take the land? I fancy it was because they could not get reliable labour.

4165. Would the owners of the Gairloch property be willing to let their land to farmers at the present time? I cannot say; I am not manager now. I said just now that we never tried to lease land to farmers, but we did just before I left the place. We tried to get farmers to grow cane to supply this mill and failed.

4166. And the terms were the same as the Colonial Sugar Company offer? Yes.

4167. Did you ever purchase cane from the farmers at Gairloch? Yes. From Stoddart and Nankivel we purchased cane for two or three years.

4168. Have you any tramways laid down on the estate? No; we used nothing but drays.

4169. You have a wire tramway over the river I see? Yes.

4170. Is part of the estate on the other side of the river? Yes.

4171. *By Mr. Cowley:* You say you employed a considerable number of Chinese—did you introduce them from China? Yes.

4172. What did they cost? I cannot say exactly. I think it was about £20 a head.

4173. How did they answer? They did not answer at all. They all absconded.

4174. Do you know how many were introduced? About 100 on each of the three estates. I am certain there were 100 at Hamleigh.

4175. These men absconding, the employers lost everything? Yes.

4176. Were the Javanese equally objectionable? Yes; they absconded to a great extent—about 50 per cent. of them.

4177. Then the loss that the Chinese and Javanese occasioned was simply because you could not get a supply of kanakas? Yes.

4178. Were the introduction fees the whole of the loss, or was there no loss resulting from want of labour to reap the crops? There was a loss on the crop, because all the labour that was available had to be put on to take the crop off. Then the next year we fared badly because the cane had not been cultivated.

4179. How many bullocks used you to kill per month on an average? On an average, nearly a bullock a day.

4180. Were they locally supplied by the squatters? Yes; round about from the tablelands.

4181. Do you recollect the amount paid in one sum to Messrs. Wierholt Bros., of Darling Downs, for draught horses for this estate? £1,300.

4182. Were there others purchased by the same firm for their other estates? Yes.

4183. What amount was paid for those? I know a large amount was paid, but I could not exactly say what it was.

4184. *By the Chairman:* Speaking as manager of this plantation for so long a period, have you any suggestions you could offer by which the present condition of the sugar industry could be improved? I think if the Government would extend the time for introducing kanakas, and take all the recruiting into their own hands, it would be advantageous. Depôts might be formed at the islands, and the kanakas sent here by steamer, the planters paying the whole cost. I think, also, that if we had a reciprocal treaty with the other colonies—particularly Victoria—sugar-growing might be made to pay. What we want is plenty of labour, so that we can cultivate at the same time that we are reaping our crops, so as to provide for next year.

4185. Was the plantation at any time fairly supplied with labour? Yes; in the early days it was.

4186. What was the result more recently? We have wanted labour recently. When I took off the crops we had a number of acres giving nearly 40 tons to the acre, and because the ratoons were not cultivated next year we only got 12 or 13 tons of cane per acre.

4187. Then at the crushing season you require an additional supply of labour? Yes; so that the cane in the field may not be in any way injured by men being taken off from it to do mill work.

4188. Is it your experience that the larger the number of kanakas employed, the larger the number of white men employed? Yes; overseers and ploughmen.

4189. The two suggestions that you have made to us with regard to labour and the reciprocity treaty with Victoria, are the only suggestions you can offer? Those are the only suggestions I can offer at present.

4190. Do you think that if a larger proportion of labour than at present available could be obtained, a larger area of land would be put under cane? Certainly. I believe we could get the farmers to grow cane for us then.

WEDNESDAY,

WEDNESDAY, 30 JANUARY, 1889.

HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.

(At Hamleigh.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

ROBERT GRIERSON BLACKMORE examined:

4191. *By the Chairman:* You are manager of the Hamleigh Estate Company? I am manager of the Hamleigh Estate, late Hamleigh Sugar Company.

4192. And its present proprietors are Wittingham Bros., of Melbourne? Yes.

4193. What is the extent of the estate? 4,700 acres.

4194. How many acres are under cultivation? 500 odd.

4195. How many acres are rendered fit for cultivation? I think that all of it that is fit at present is under crop.

4196. How many acres of the plain land can be cultivated if necessary? I consider there are 1,500 acres of good cultivatable land.

4197. *By Mr. King:* Are these 500 acres under cane? Yes.

4198. *By the Chairman:* How many tons of cane did you crush last season? None.

4199. What was the reason that no crushing took place? We were unable to do any planting or could not get a crop in.

4200. How long have the present proprietors been in possession of this estate? Within a month of two years.

4201. Had the Hamleigh Sugar Company any land under cane? Oh, yes.

4202. Then since the present proprietors have taken possession of the plantation no crushing has been done? They had a small crushing the year they acquired possession.

4203. Do you hope to have a crushing next season? Yes.

4204. How much capital is invested in this estate? Originally, £120,000.

4205. That was the amount of capital invested by the Hamleigh Sugar Company? Yes.

4206. Have you any idea what Wittingham Brothers paid for the estate? Yes; but I do not know whether I should be committing a breach of confidence if I mentioned that.

4207. *By Mr. King:* This is a Royal Commission, and we are entitled to full information? They gave £13,000.

4208. Do you know whether it paid interest as long as the Hamleigh Company had it? I could not say. I should fancy it scarcely did so, taking into account the whole period during which they held it.

4209. *By the Chairman:* Was the property offered for sale by auction or sold privately? It was sold by public auction.

4210. And £13,000 was the highest bid for an estate which had cost £120,000? Yes.

4211. What labour do you employ on the plantation, and the number of each class? The number of Europeans permanently employed is 32; some of them are married men with children. Polynesians permanently employed, 65; Javanese permanently employed, 46; Europeans, extra, 20, engaged during four months of the year; Chinese, extra, 40. I have engaged them simply for draining at the present time, and I shall employ them for two months. The total wages paid to the permanent Europeans, exclusive of cost of rations, is £2,160; the cost of rations is £380—total, £2,545. Polynesians, 65: wages, £725; rations, £1,185—total, £1,910. Javanese, 46: wages, £800; cost of rations, £840—total, £1,640. I would call the attention of the Commissioners to the very liberal rations supplied to Polynesians, as compared with other labour we employ. Europeans, extra, 20: wages, £452; cost of rations, £122. That is for a period of four months. Chinese, extra, 40: wages, £522; rations, £225. Total wages payments, £4,657; total cost of rations, £2,957. I have put down an average of 35 horses employed, the feed for which, including oats, maize, and sweet potatoes, costs £635. That brings my expenditure up to £8,349. That is, of course, exclusive of wear and tear of plant, which has to be renewed, and interest on capital.

4212. Would that £8,349 be your average annual expenditure? It has been so during the twenty-one months I have been here.

4213. What do you do with the balance of the estate not under cane? We have stocked that with cattle.

4214. Can you give us the number of cattle? 570 head at present, and 90 head of horses.

4215. *By Mr. Cowley:* Those are mostly draughts? There are a fair number of light harness horses and hacks.

4216. They are used for the working of the place? Yes; they are not all fed. Included in the rations which I have given the value of, we have purchased about 200 head of cattle a year for killing purposes, which have cost £3 12s. a head, giving a total of £720 a year. Of course I am in hopes that when our present cattle come on, we shall be able to do with what we breed ourselves.

4217. *By the Chairman:* You have made all your arrangements for breeding cattle? Yes.

4218. Owing to the drought have you adopted any means to encourage the growth of the cane? Yes; we have done everything that we could have fairly managed with our resources.

4219. What have you done? After four months of dry weather, we have watered the cane by means of the pumps at present on the place. That which was dead we ploughed out and replanted under a different system, irrigating first and then planting in the rows.

4220. *By Mr. King:* Did you find that satisfactory? Yes; I found it far more satisfactory to plant with water, than to plant first and water afterwards.

4221. What

R. G.
Blackmore.
30 Jan., 1889.

R.G.
Blackmore.
30 Jan., 1889.

4221. What do you consider the cost per acre? I think we made it up to something like 25s. an acre, irrigating after the plants were in, and something over £1 to irrigate before planting.
4222. Do you think it repays the cost? I do. I consider that had I thought of it in time the crops would have been so far advanced now, that it would have paid handsomely for the outlay.
4223. What extent of land can you irrigate with the means at your disposal? The whole of the cultivable land.
4224. *By the Chairman*: You have every description of agricultural implement on the estate that can be procured in assisting to make the land available? Yes; I think there is nothing we have not tried.
4225. You have steam ploughs? Yes.
4226. And you are now further improving the land by an improved system of drainage? Yes.
4227. What is the system known as? The mole drainage system.
4228. You are of opinion that that will improve the estate for the cultivation of cane? Yes.
4229. *By Mr. King*: That is done by steam power? Yes. I may explain that the chief benefit I think will be derived from the draining is, that when a wet season does set in it is excessively heavy, and there has been no means of getting the water off the land.
4230. *By the Chairman*: Had you any previous experience in cane growing, before taking charge of this plantation? Yes; I have managed twice before, and have been connected with the industry for seventeen years.
4231. Is it your opinion that everything is being done on this plantation that can be done to get the most out of the sugar cane that can be obtained? I am quite certain of it.
4232. *By Mr. King*: What description of labour do you consider most suitable for the cultivation of the cane in the field? I think we cannot improve on Polynesians.
4233. Are whites willing and able to do the field work with the hoe and trashing? I have never been able to ever get them to think of it for a moment. I have tried them repeatedly.
4234. Do you know the cost of the machinery in the mill? I can give a rough estimate. I should say between £30,000 and £40,000 for machinery and buildings.
4235. Where was the machinery obtained? Nearly all from Europe. There is some locally-made machinery amongst it.
4236. Has your cane during the last year suffered from any blight or disease? No; nothing but the dry weather.
4237. You have not had the grub? No; not here.
4238. Did this plantation ever suffer from locusts? Yes.
4239. Were you here at the time? I was in the district.
4240. In what year was it? I think 1882.
4241. How did they affect the crop? Well, they simply wiped it out. They eat it down to the ground.
4242. Where did they come from, and how did they first make their appearance? As far as I am informed in the matter they appeared to come from the north-west. They came over the range. They were seen considerable distances from the plantations.
4243. Did they come in large numbers, or did they stop and breed here? They came in large numbers.
4244. And cleared off all the cultivation? They seemed to clear off a track of a certain width. There were some portions of the district that were exempt from the visitation.
4245. How many acres would you allow to each black labourer? I should not care to have more than two to three acres under cultivation to one labourer. That would be the outside. I do not think I could do justice to the land with less.
4246. Have you got sufficient labour now? No; I have not.
4247. How many labourers would you require to cultivate this plantation in the way you think it best to cultivate it? From 250 to 300 with our present cultivation.
4248. Have you any prospect of obtaining them? At present we are interested in one charter, which we hope to see here inside of the next two months; but we have not been able to make any other charters up to date, although I am anxious to do so now.
4249. What is the cost of your annual overhaul? About £400, to put everything in order, provided it is kept in fairly respectable order. That is exclusive of repairs to steam ploughs.
4250. Your thirty-two Europeans include several mechanics? I have got at the present time three mechanics.
4251. What wages do you pay the mechanics? They get up to £4. A blacksmith gets £3; drivers get 50s. and double rations.
4252. What is the lowest wages paid to Europeans? £1 a week and double rations.
4253. *By Mr. Conley*: You experience great difficulty in chartering vessels to go to the South Sea Islands? Yes.
4254. Do you often have to pay a big deposit to these vessels? We have had to pay a very excessive deposit for both the last charter and the present one.
4255. How much? We pay £500 before the vessel sails. That is exclusive of all capitation fees and other expenses. They consider the risk much greater now than they did formerly. When I asked the man that I am in treaty with now for a more reasonable charter he explained that the risk was too great—that if anything happened to the Government Agent he might be ordered back at any moment. Vessels frequently come back only one-third full. We receive no compensation, and have to allow our capitation fees to stand over until the vessel sails again. Instead of returning with 160 labourers one of our vessels came back with only 40. The Government Agent had been playing with dynamite and blew his hand off, and the vessel had to return.
4256. I suppose this all increases the price? Yes; owners ask so much more, because they say the risk is so great.
4257. Do you think it would be advisable for the Government to undertake this duty at the cost of the planter? I feel certain we should get a much more reasonable charter if the Government would place an assistant Government Agent on board, so that in case of accident the vessel would not be ordered back until she had completed her voyage. The cost would be willingly paid by the charterers, and would give them so much more security.
4258. Has it ever come under your notice that men have been taken away from this district through no fault of the plantation owners, and before the expiration of the islanders' agreement? Yes; I do know that that has been done through no fault of the planters.

4259. Do

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4259. Do you think that if the Government could take the introduction of the islanders into their own hands entirely, it would prevent all abuses? I feel perfectly certain it would. That has been my opinion ever since I have been connected with the sugar industry. My view of the matter is, that it would have worked much better, and the abuses which have existed would never have arisen had an Imperial officer been placed in charge—retired naval officers might be placed in charge as Government Agents, because the Government Agents who have been placed in charge are not the class of men to deal with a shrewd and unscrupulous skipper. The whole of the loss from any wrong-doing falls on the charterers, and not on the people who have done the wrong. I think the recruits should be brought to a central place in the South Sea Islands, and all the boys forwarded from there by steamer. The Imperial authorities would be very willing to supervise the traffic by having a vessel always at the station. The boys could be locally examined by a medical officer, and those who came to Queensland would come with a clean sheet.

4260. You say this estate consists of 4,700 acres. Was it originally selected by the Hamleigh Sugar Company, or purchased from small selectors? Purchased from small selectors.

4261. Did they cultivate the land? No; they had stock on it.

4262. Can you tell us the amount of land that has been under crop here at any one time? I believe there has been 2,000 acres, or a little over, under crop at different times. In giving my return as 1,500 acres of cultivable land, I alluded to land that I could take in at the present time without going into draining.

4263. Do you know whether the present proprietors were shareholders in the Hamleigh Sugar Company? They were.

4264. Have you manured your land at all? A little.

4265. Do you purchase cane from anyone? Not at present. We have made several offers to people in the district to grow, but they do not seem to care to go into it. They say that the same difficulty exists with them as with us—they cannot get labour.

4266. You would be prepared to lease this land? I should be very happy to do so.

4267. At what rental per acre? I would give it at a nominal rental for a term, lend horses and implements to start with, and buy the cane on the ground.

4268. Have you made that offer public? I have made it public repeatedly.

4269. Do you know if there is any other objection besides the labour question? No; that is the principal objection. Farmers say that they would not like to go into it without some assistance.

4270. How do you convey your cane to the mill? By tramway.

4271. How many miles have you? Six and a-half miles.

4272. By Mr. King: Do you work it with horses? Yes.

4273. By Mr. Cowley: Is your machinery in the mill of the best description? It is the best that can be had for money.

4274. An economical plant to work? It is very economical; there may be one or two improvements necessary, but taken altogether it could scarcely be improved upon.

4275. Have you ever experienced any difficulty with your South Sea Islanders—do they work well? They are extremely easy to manage.

4276. Do you find that the white men in the district object to them? Not at all. They are most agreeable with them. The men employed on the plantation speak most highly of the Polynesians.

4277. If you could obtain as many islanders as you want, would you extend your cultivation? Most decidedly. I could treble our expenditure to-morrow if I could obtain the men I want.

4278. By doing that would you increase the number of white men you employ? Yes; I should have close upon 100 white men employed permanently.

4279. How many tons of sugar is your mill capable of making in a full crushing season of five months? We could turn out 2,000 and odd tons.

4280. You think you could turn that quantity out if you could get the labour? I feel certain that with ordinary seasons we could easily do it.

4281. How do you find the Javanese work? They are not as industrious as the Polynesians.

4282. Are they under agreement? They are.

4283. Do you feel inclined to repeat the experiment of introducing more of them? I should not care to do so if I could possibly do without them.

4284. Are the proprietors under a bond to return these men at the expiration of their term? Yes.

4285. Do you know why they were originally introduced? Because we could not get Polynesians. We should have lost the crops growing at the time.

4286. You have had eight years' experience in this district? Yes.

4287. You have also had experience in Mackay? Yes; Mackay and Brisbane.

4288. Do you know of any crop that could be grown to pay in this district? I do not, indeed. Corn is too uncertain, although occasionally a good crop can be obtained.

4289. If you could obtain South Sea Islanders at a fair rate, and at the same rate of wages that you now pay, could you make sugar-growing pay on this plantation at the present prices? I think I could.

4290. And pay interest on the capital invested? I think so.

4291. By the Chairman: Are you aware that the importation of kanakas ceases at the end of 1890? Yes; I am.

4292. Have you any idea of what the probable effect will be, so far as this plantation is concerned? Yes; I know pretty well what will be done. I can simply state what my programme is. I shall endeavour to get as many kanakas as I can between now and the end of next year. That will probably give me enough to keep the place going for three years. After that time, with the number of expired kanakas remaining in the country, we should probably keep on a little while longer; but after that I see nothing for it but to close the place and go back to cattle again.

4293. You have watched during the last eight years the sugar industry at one time in a flourishing condition, and sugar at a good price, and at another time you have seen the industry depressed.—What in your opinion are the causes of that depression? The chief cause of it has been the want of labour. One year we have been able to get a fair crop in and after it a good crushing; but we have been unable to get labour to get the next crop in, and the plantation has gone back. Once ground goes out of cultivation it costs more to get it back than it did to start it originally. I would rather begin with new ground than begin on a place that had been partially abandoned.

4294. Do

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4294. Do you think the low price of sugar has had something to do with the depression? No doubt; but I do not believe the original proprietors would have parted with the place but for the difficulty they experienced in getting labour. We must expect an occasional fall in price and occasionally bad seasons, but it is usual to be able to reckon on labour to work the place.

4295. Having stated what in your opinion are the causes of the depression in the sugar industry, can you offer us any suggestions by which the present condition of affairs can be improved? I suggest that the provisions of the Polynesian Act be extended from year to year, and if the Government saw that by so doing the districts were improving and going ahead, it might encourage them to go on for another year, and by and by we might induce the European population to take up portions of the estates as I suggest, and gradually form themselves into what will be village settlements. I am sure there is nothing the proprietors would welcome more. I would like also to see reciprocity—a general duty agreed to by all the colonies on foreign-grown sugar, and more especially sugar that is grown under the bounty system. I do not approve of any other form of assistance from the Government, because it would do more to kill the industry than anything else. A fair amount of protection is all that we should ask.

4296. Do you know that the farmers of this district were offered a central mill? Yes; I do know that.

4297. Can you state the reasons why that offer was declined by the farmers of the Herbert River? Yes. They said, in answer to a question put to them by the representative of the Government, that they would not attempt to grow sugar without coloured labour.

4298. Do you think that any improvement could be made in the despatch of produce from the Herbert River? Very great improvement indeed.

4299. Have you suffered from the present arrangements? Very much so.

4300. You think that also has assisted to depress the industry? It has done so more in our own particular case than in that of others more favourably situated. We have twelve miles additional carriage, which Maenade and Ripple Creek, for instance, do not suffer from. I am in favour of a system of tramways through the district. I think that communication with our own port by means of a small tramway going by the farms along the river and out towards the Stone River settlement, would induce the farmers to grow cane for us, and would induce them to grow other produce for which there is a good market. That would very much increase our prospects of a large out-put, and it would bring us in communication with a number of farmers in the district. Instead of having one mill to offer their cane to, the farmers would then have two or three, and that would be the means of giving them a better price, because there would be competition. A tramway such as the Colonial Sugar Company uses would be ample for the requirements of the district for years, and would do much towards its development.

4301. The district has suffered for two seasons, and is still suffering from a severe drought? Yes.

4302. If it continues will it have a very serious effect on the crop of next year? I fear so.

4303. I noticed as we drove through the plantation this evening that you had a number of Chinese employed—what are they employed at just now? We have them draining at present.

4304. Do you consider them a desirable class of labour? I do not, indeed.

4305. Are they of any benefit to the country or district in which they live? I do not think so; none whatever.

4306. Do they add to the wealth of the district by expending their earnings? I am quite sure they do not. They impoverish the district. They buy nothing from Europeans, and all the money that is paid to them goes out of the country.

4307. You would not like to see the lands of the district leased to them on the village settlement principle? No; I would not. I should be disposed to leave the district directly.

4308. Is the climate of the Herbert River adapted to a European population? Fairly so.

4309. In the sugar industry is it so? Yes; but I should not care to see Europeans engaged in certain occupations on plantations. I consider they are scarcely fitted for it; but the bulk of the work, I believe, could be done by Europeans.

4310. Without any detriment to their health? Yes.

4311. *By Mr. Cowley:* Holding the opinions you do upon the Chinese, you are simply driven to employing them because you cannot get other labour? That is the reason. I may say they are finishing up a job that I did not want to employ Europeans for. I prefer Europeans for draining, but I had only one drain to finish, and these Chinese, having just finished some weeding, I allowed them to complete their month's work at draining.

4312. *By the Chairman:* Do you think the district would grow any other tropical produce besides sugar? Nothing but fruit. I cannot speak of rice or coffee, because I have had no experience.

4313. You have had no practical experience yourself in fruit growing? None whatever.

4314. You do not know whether a farmer settling down on land with a view of growing fruit could make a living? Not without improved means of transit. That would be the chief item in fruit growing.

4315. The means of transit, you know from your own knowledge, is at present very unsatisfactory? Yes. I have been manager to the Herbert River Forwarding Company for five years, and the whole of the trade of the district is in our hands. The charges certainly are high, but I cannot lower them, because we are barely paying expenses. The rate from Townsville to Duungness by steamer is £1 a ton, and from Duungness to Ingham 25s. a ton—that is the wholesale charge, but for the general public it would be a little higher.

4316. *By Mr. Cowley:* That is owing to the imperfect navigation of the river? Yes; it is an exceptionally difficult river to work. It is extremely low, and can only be worked on tides.

4317. *By the Chairman:* How far does the steamer transit from Townsville to Duungness affect the district—are the arrangements satisfactory? They are good enough and ample enough, although it is rather expensive. We get the goods up from Duungness the same week that they arrive, but I cannot lower the rates.

4318. Have you carried any fruit from here to Duungness to ship by steamer? Yes; we have shipped a considerable quantity of bananas and maize.

4319. Have the arrangements been satisfactory? Satisfactory as to the time in which I got the fruit away and the time in which we landed it, but the profit was small after the charges had been paid.

4320. The effect would be to retard the cultivation of those articles? Yes; the farmers have ceased to ship. There are old lots of bananas and sweet potatoes shipped by Chinese.

THURSDAY, 31 JANUARY, 1889.

HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.

(At Victoria.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

WILLIAM McLEAN examined:

4321. *By the Chairman*: You are acting manager of Victoria Plantation, the property of the Colonial W. McLean. Sugar Refining Company? Yes.

4322. How long have you been acting in that capacity? One month.

4323. And what were you previously on the plantation? Agricultural overseer.

4324. Have you had experience elsewhere in the cultivation of sugar? Yes.

4325. Have you grown any other tropical produce besides sugar? No.

4326. Do you know the total area of Victoria Plantation? Roughly speaking, I believe it is 20,000 acres.

4327. How many acres are under cultivation by sugar? From something over 2,000 to something under 3,000 acres.

4328. How many acres of cane were crushed here last season? Something over 2,000.

4329. Can you give us an approximate idea of the amount of sugar that was made? I would rather leave that question to be answered by the general manager.

4330. How did the return of last year compare with that of previous years? It was slightly, but not much, behind the previous year.

4331. What do you do with your molasses? It all goes to the field—I mean that it is thrown away.

4332. Made manure of? No; not even that. It is a waste product.

4333. The amount of capital invested in the estate you would prefer the general manager to answer? Yes.

4334. What labour do you employ on the plantation? Europeans, kanakas, Chinese, and Javanese.

4335. Can you give us the number of each? 375 kanakas, all told, including children.

4336. How many Chinese? The number of Chinese varies. At the present time I dare say we have between fifty and sixty, and about twenty Javanese.

4337. What number of Europeans do you employ? The number of Europeans varies according to the season.

4338. *By Mr. King*: What is the number permanently employed? 103, all told.

4339. How many extra do you employ at crushing time? There are about 150, all told, in the crushing season.

4340. *By the Chairman*: What wages do you pay to the respective classes of labour? European ploughmen, £1 a week; mill hands, from £1 to £3, according to the work they are engaged in; engineers, £3 10s. to £4 10s.

4341. With rations and quarters? Yes; all with rations and quarters.

4342. What rate of wages do you pay to Chinese? 15s. a week and rations.

4343. And to Javanese? They are under some special agreement. They were transferred from Gairloch under a special agreement.

4344. What rate of wages do you pay to kanakas? £6 to £18 a year with rations.

4345. What description of labour do you find most suitable for field work? Field work cannot be properly carried on here except with mixed labour.

4346. For manual labour in the field which class of labour do you prefer—what class of coloured labour? Kanakas are the most suitable.

4347. Have you ever employed European labour at trashing and hoeing? Not at trashing and hoeing but at planting.

4348. Were Europeans successful in planting? No; they were not.

4349. What rate of wages did you give white men for planting cane? £1 a week.

4350. Did they continue to work for any length of time at it? Yes; they did—for several weeks, at all events.

4351. Was it contract work? No; they were on weekly wages.

4352. Why did they not give you satisfaction? In the quantity of work done.

4353. The Europeans receiving £1 a week and rations for planting cane did not do the same amount of work that kanakas would do? No; they did not.

4354. Were the Europeans satisfied with the work? No; they considered it beneath them.

4355. You have a considerable area of the land under cultivation by agricultural implements? Yes; the whole of it.

4356. A very large number of Europeans are employed in the cultivation of cane? They are.

4357. You employ steam ploughs? Yes.

4358. And agricultural implements of every description? Yes; all sorts.

4359. How many steam ploughs have you? We have two sets, but we have had as many as four working here.

4360. Is the estate healthy? Yes; as a rule it is.

4361. Neither blacks or Europeans suffer from any epidemic? Occasionally. We have had a little diarrhoea, but that is the only thing we have suffered from here.

4362. Do you grow any other tropical products besides sugar? Nothing but a few sweet potatoes.

4363. Then your experience as an agriculturist has been confined entirely to sugar growing? We have tried other crops on a very small scale here, but nothing to speak of. I may say it is confined to sugar growing.

4364. *By Mr. King*: Did the crops last year suffer any damage from grubs or any other vermin or disease? No; not on Victoria.

4365. Has

31 Jan., 1889.

- W. McLean. 4365. Has the crop here ever suffered from any kind of blight, or pest of any kind? One year it suffered a little from an insect that we call the "borer." That was two years ago.
- 31 Jan., 1889. 4366. By *Mr. Coupley*: Was the loss considerable? No; the insect commenced its depredations in the crushing season, and when we had a field affected we cut it down and put it through the rollers directly.
4367. Has there been any reappearance of the "borer"? No.
4368. Did you adopt any measures to check it? No; nothing but cutting the cane and putting it through the rollers immediately.
4369. By *Mr. Coupley*: Do you know whether the "borer" is the same insect that did so much damage in Mauritius? The work done by the "borer" seems to me to somewhat resemble the depredations of an insect I have seen in the West Indies.
4370. Did your chemist examine any, or did you send any down south to be examined? No.
4371. Was any considerable area affected with it? No; merely patches.
4372. When you say you have between 2,000 or 3,000 acres under cultivation, is that inclusive or exclusive of the amount of cane on Gairloch? Gairloch is included.
4373. Have you a hospital on the plantation? Yes; but all patients are sent into the Ingham Hospital, and ours has not been used for some time.
4374. Do you know whether the instructions to the manager have always been to treat the kanakas with every kindness and give them every consideration? Yes; it has always been so, so far as I know.
4375. Is that a standing rule on the plantation? It is.
4376. And provision is made for their comfort at all times? Yes; great care is always taken of the boys in every way.
4377. Have you ever heard the kanakas complain of anything which tends to prevent them coming to the district in larger numbers than they do? No; I have not.
4378. Do you support many farmers otherwise than by purchasing cane from them—men growing potatoes and corn? Yes.
4379. What quantity of potatoes per month do you purchase from the local farmers? From 8 to 10 tons per week.
4380. Can you tell us the number of bullocks you kill here per week? At present we are killing from twelve to thirteen per week.
4381. And this is a slack season? Yes.
4382. By the *Chairman*: From your experience as an agricultural overseer on this plantation can you offer us any suggestions by which in your opinion the sugar industry can be improved or assisted? Only by a sufficient supply of coloured labour. I believe it could be considerably assisted if we had that.
4383. Do you mean by that that if a larger supply of coloured labour were made accessible a larger area of land would be placed under sugar cane? I do not exactly mean that; I mean that probably we would be able to take more off the land that we have under cultivation at present.
4384. By *Mr. King*: You mean that you have not sufficient labour to properly cultivate what you have under crop? Yes; of course we cannot get along without a certain quantity of coloured labour. It is impossible to grow cane successfully unless we have a certain amount of coloured labour.
4385. By the *Chairman*: Is it not a rule that the higher the land is cultivated by means of steam ploughs and other agricultural implements the larger the yield of cane? Granted that, but there is certain work amongst cane that cannot be done by any implement whatever, nothing but the hoe will do it.
4386. Then it is to do the latter part of the work that you are of opinion more labour is required, and by that means the industry can be assisted? Yes.
4387. How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each black labourer employed? That is a question I have not gone into.
4388. Would that not specially come within the scope of your duties—apportioning the labour on the plantation? True, but I have not got the apportioning of the labour. I have never gone into a calculation on the matter.
4389. By *Mr. Coupley*: Besides the permanent white labourers that you employ, have you any contractors employed? There are a few.
4390. What are they doing? They are splitting sleepers for the tramlines.
4391. Is that the whole of the contract working being done? We have some contractors getting firewood at present.
4392. White men? Yes.
4393. Can you tell us how many farmers are under contract to supply the mill with cane? I think about eleven.
4394. And they supply how many acres? About 700.
4395. Do you know whether the company is willing to take cane from growers? That is a question I cannot very well answer.
4396. By the *Chairman*: Does the 20,000 acres that the estate consists of include the 6,000 acres west of Ingham? I think so. I am not very sure about the figures myself. I am only speaking roughly.
4397. By *Mr. King*: It includes all the company's land? Yes.
4398. By the *Chairman*: Is there a chemical laboratory on the estate? Yes.
4399. Where the cane and soil can be analysed? They have not done any analysis of soil yet—only cane and sugar.
4400. By *Mr. King*: Is the mill a double crusher? Yes.
4401. Do you macerate the cane? Yes.
4402. And these chemists are constantly at work testing the results? Constantly, all through the season.
4403. To see that the reis no waste? Yes.
4404. What number of miles of tramline has the company got? Something over eighteen miles of permanent tramline.
4405. Worked by locomotives? Yes.
4406. Have you any portable tramway in addition? Yes; there is about four miles of portable tramway in addition.

FRIDAY, 1 FEBRUARY, 1889.

HERBERT RIVER DISTRICT.

(At the Divisional Board Hall, Ingham.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

Dr. WILLIAM CRAIG CHRISTIAN MACDONALD examined:

4407. *By the Chairman:* You are a legally qualified medical practitioner? I am.

4408. You are surgeon in charge of the Ingham hospital? Yes; and hospital for Polynesians.

4409. How long have you been in the district? Nearly six years.

4410. What has been the general health of the European population during that time? I should call this a healthy district.

4411. Can you give an approximate idea of the mortality? I have not seen any statistics of the population of the district, but last year in the white hospital we had one death, and the year before five. In the last two years in the European hospital there have only been six deaths—coming under my own immediate notice not more than four or five deaths a year.

4412. What has been the condition of the Polynesians during that time? When I first came upon the river, about five and a-half years ago, the deaths were very frequent, and the state of health was at a very low ebb indeed. It was a very common thing to see as many as four or five boys die in a week. Epidemics followed close upon one another. Dysentery and pneumonia were very prevalent at that time.

4413. What is the condition of the health of the Polynesian population now? I consider that it has gone on improving. I might give you some statistics. In 1883, the first year of the hospital being open, there was a percentage of 11.8 deaths.

4414. *By Mr. King:* Is that on the whole population? It represents the whole population.

4415. It represents the whole of the kanakas, and not only those in the hospital? It really represents the whole of the kanakas, because none died elsewhere. There were 347 admitted into the hospital, and 41 died. In 1887 there were 534 admissions, with 25 deaths. The percentage works out to 4.63, a decrease of about 7 per cent. In 1888 there were 831 admissions and 30 deaths, which works out a percentage of 3.1 per cent. Up to the present time in this year there have been 127 admissions, with 4 deaths, representing 3.1 per cent.; so that since 1886 the percentage has been reduced from 11.8 to 3.1. Before that it would be almost impossible to get at the percentage, but I should say there must have been something like 20 per cent. of deaths.

4416. *By the Chairman:* Then you consider that as the district becomes more settled, and the land is more occupied there is a decrease in the deaths? Yes.

4417. The district becomes more healthy, in point of fact? Yes; I think the great thing that has caused the sickness in the early times amongst kanakas has been imperfect clothing, by which means they contract pneumonia, and indiscriminate bathing at all hours of the morning and night.

4418. You do not consider the present clothing excessive? No. The great matter is to compel them to wear the clothes. Whenever they finish their work at night they throw the clothes off, and spend the coldest part of the evening without clothes. I consider a great factor in the improvement of health is the water supply. In the early times the water and creeks were full of impure vegetable and animal matter; but owing to improved drainage, to the action of time, and the large works that are carried out it is gradually becoming improved.

4419. How do you account for the large number of Polynesians (eighty-five) now in the hospital? I consider it due to the recent dry season, and at Victoria in particular. The number is almost entirely supplied from Victoria plantation. There is no increase of sickness, to speak of, at any of the other plantations. The circumstances of Victoria are assisted by the fact that there have been two recent shiploads arrive there—nearly 200 new arrivals. Under whatever circumstances they arrive they always represent a certain amount of sickness until they become acclimatised. In addition to that the water supply at Victoria is very unsatisfactory. The only water supply is obtained from the creeks and wells, but they have made every effort to improve the water supply. They have put up large boilers to boil the water and aerate it, but, as a matter of fact, the boys are not very partial to it, and if not watched will drink the creek water of their own accord. This causes a large amount of diarrhoea, dysentery, and malarial fever.

4420. You had to pass all the boys on Victoria plantation? Not all. The recent arrivals I passed.

4421. They were then in a thoroughly healthy condition? They were.

4422. What other disease do they suffer from when they go into the hospital? Principally from stomachic complaints, diarrhoea, and dysentery. Another disease which new arrivals are very liable to is influenza, if there happens to be an epidemic in the district. It runs through them in the same way as measles and scarlatina does in a European community. That has been the case with the last lot. Influenza was prevalent at Victoria, and nearly all the new arrivals suffered from it. It is an epidemic catarrh. It is not in itself a very fatal disease, but often leads to fatal results, from the fact that the boys are more liable to contract pneumonia and bronchitis.

4423. After they have been once treated in the hospital and become acclimatised, do they suffer from a recurrence of this disease? They are not very subject to a recurrence of influenza. If they continually drink bad water they get diarrhoea. I do not find that influenza attacks the same boy frequently, although I do not say that the attack gives them entire immunity to it. Attacks of diarrhoea and dysentery are very common.

4424. That will account for the large number of patients admitted in 1883? That would account for it. The cases which generally cause death arise from phthisis or sunstroke.

4425. Speaking from your experience, do you consider that the district is healthy for the employment of kanakas? Yes, I do.

4426. Have

Dr. W. C. C.
McDonald.

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4426. Have you had many of the Javanese in the hospital? No, but that can be accounted for. It is not from the fact that they have not been sick, it is simply because employers do not send them to the hospital. They treat them on the plantation.
4427. Have you treated many of them? Yes.
4428. What diseases are they subject to? It takes six or eight months before they become acclimatised. They suffer very much from venereal disease, and from chest complaints, such as bronchitis and pleurisy, and frequently fever. There was also an epidemic of measles amongst the Javanese in the early part of last year, but it did not spread to the Polynesians because of the great precautions the various managers took to keep them entirely isolated. If the Javanese were in such large numbers as the kanakas there would be very little difference in the amount of sickness amongst them.
4429. Have you visited the Polynesian quarters at the various plantations? I have.
4430. How are the sanitary arrangements attended to? They are very well attended to, as a rule.
4431. Are their quarters kept clean? They are cleaned out thoroughly once a week.
4432. So that in point of fact none of the kanakas suffer from what is called a "filth" disease? None whatever. They suffer terribly from ringworm, but that they bring from the islands. They generally get cured here.
4433. *By Mr King*: Are you the retained visiting medical officer of the different plantations? No, but I may state that until the end of this year the position I held was resident surgeon, and I also was expected to visit the plantations, but since this year I have not.
4434. We have found in other districts—for instance, in Geraldton—that the doctor receives a salary from each plantation for which he has to make an inspection once a week and also attend to all requirements. Is there any such arrangement in this district? I am sorry to say there is not.
4435. I suppose you are not often sent for to attend boys on the plantations? It is only since this year that the new arrangement came into force. Last year I was very frequently sent for.
4436. Are there any qualified medical men on the plantations about here? No; there are none.
4437. In cases of sickness do you find the boys are sent into the hospital in good time? Yes; in very good time. I have nothing to complain of in that respect, with one or two exceptions. I can hardly recall an instance of delay. I find on the other hand, that the planters are very anxious to send any severe cases into the hospital.
4438. *By Mr. Cowley*: During the last two years you attended the plantations if required? Yes.
4439. During that time were there any deaths? No; with the exception of one or two deaths for which the causes were given as heart disease. They were taken notice of officially, and inquiries held.
4440. When you were visiting the plantations and there were serious cases, did you treat them there? They were generally sent to the hospital if the boys were capable of being removed.
4441. I see you give a percentage in 1886 of 11·8 deaths and 347 admissions to the hospital; in 1888 there were 851 admissions and 30 deaths. Was it not a fact that in 1886 the bulk of the cases unless very severe were treated on the plantations? It is a fact.
4442. Therefore the 11·8 per cent. only includes those that were admitted to the hospital. That is not the percentage of deaths for the men in the neighbourhood? No deaths occurred on the plantations.
4443. I will put it in other words. In 1886 were there not more kanakas in the district than in 1888? I think there were. I cannot speak from any definite knowledge, but I believe there were considerably more.
4444. So that really the percentage of deaths was less or about equal in 1886 to that of 1888 although there were not as many treated in the hospital in 1886? No. I am under the impression that the percentage would not work out the same. At any rate in 1887 it would not work out anything like the same. If you could find out what the population was it would be very easy to work the figures out.
4445. 1886 being the first year of the establishment of the hospital the bulk of the plantation hospitals were in full swing and none but the serious cases were sent to the central hospital? That was the case.
4446. The 11·8 percentage of deaths includes those that were sent to the hospital. It is not a percentage of the population of the district? No not a percentage of the district.
4447. You cannot say positively what was the percentage of the population? I cannot say positively.
4448. Of the new arrivals now in the hospital are there any serious cases? Yes; there are several.
4449. What are those cases? One case of pneumonia and several cases of dysentery.
4450. You say that five whites died in the hospital in 1887? About that number.
4451. Can you tell us the number of patients admitted during 1887? About 100.
4452. That is 5 per cent of deaths? Yes; in 1888 there were 130 admitted and only one died.
4453. *By Mr. King*: Is it not considered proper that the dysentery patients should be separated from the others—is there not some danger of the disease being transmitted? There is a danger, unless very strict sanitary conditions are studied.
4454. Have you any means of separating them in the hospital? No.
4455. Do you not think there ought to be means of separating them? I think it would be a great advantage if there were.
4456. *By the Chairman*: Do you use cesspits or earthen pans at the hospital? Earthen pans, which are cleaned every day, and twice a day in cases of dysentery. In addition to the earth we use crude carbolic acid as a disinfectant.
4457. Then are the patients suffering from dysentery obliged to use one after another the same earthen pan, or in other ways by which the excreta can be taken away and buried or burnt? Very severe cases have separate pans, but for the cases that are improving there are three different water closets that can be used.
4458. *By Mr. King*: What number of patients should be accommodated in the Polynesian ward of the hospital? Not more than thirty-five.
4459. What number have you now? Seventy-six; but I may state that the verandas are used. They do not all sleep in the hospital. Screens are put up to protect them from the weather. In the hospital itself, in inclement weather, there ought to be only room really for thirty-five patients.
4460. *By the Chairman*: Speaking from a medical point of view, do you think that the food at present supplied to kanakas on the plantations is suitable, or could you suggest any improvement of the dietary scale? I am in favour of a substantial meal being given in the middle of the day. That meal ought, in my opinion, to be the meal of the day. I consider there ought to be more rest in the middle of the day especially in the summer weather. They ought to be allowed not less than one and a-half hours for the

mid-day

mid-day meal, and they ought not to go to work so early in the summer time—not until the sun is well up and all the mist has dispersed. If they must go in for the full number of hours, it would be better to work late in the evening. A couple of hours saved in the morning, I consider, would be highly important as regards the health of the boys.

4461. *By Mr. Cowley*: If you take off two hours in the morning and half an hour in the middle of the day you would have to work them by moonlight? If they started at 7 in the morning and worked till 5 there would be a loss of two hours, but it would be no hardship to work them until half past 6 in the summer.

4462. *By the Chairman*: Is sickness among the kanakas more prevalent in the summer than in the winter? Yes; and of a different type and character. The winter sickness is inflammable sickness, such as bronchitis and colds. With regard to the dietary scale, I consider tea ought to be supplied to the boys twice a day. That is quite sufficient. I do not approve of excessive tea drinking. Like smoking, with the boys it is entirely an artificial stimulant, and of such a weak and mild nature that it can hardly be taken into consideration. If it were absolutely necessary to give some stimulant, it would be much better and less injurious to give some spirits. Tea should only be given twice a day.

WILLIAM THOMAS WHITE examined:

4463. *By the Chairman*: You are a selector and grazier on the Herbert River? I am.

4464. How long have you resided in the district? Continuously for four years—occasionally for about nine years.

4465. That is thirteen years' experience altogether? No; I came here originally about thirteen years ago, but it was only for about six months. I have been living here occasionally since the beginning of 1880, and permanently since the beginning of 1885.

4466. What is the extent of your holding? With what I own and what I lease, about 5,000 acres.

4467. How much of that area do you cultivate? I have only twelve acres under cultivation, including garden.

4468. You carry on dairying to a large extent? I do.

4469. How many cows do you milk daily? About seventy at present.

4470. Have you a cream separator? Yes; one of De Laval's, the A1 size.

4471. Do you confine your attention to your own milk, or do you take milk from your neighbours? Only what we raise ourselves.

4472. How much butter do you make per week? Latterly 140 lbs., exclusive of what we use.

4473. What is the market price of it? 2s. a lb.

4474. Can you dispose of all you make? I have no difficulty in disposing of it here.

4475. How do you feed your milking cows? They have not been fed very well up to the present time. Most of them are turned out on grass, and a few are fed on chaff, sorghum, and maize.

4476. Have you tried any ensilage? I tried a small quantity last year made from maize.

4477. How did it succeed? Very well, indeed. The quantity was very small, and consequently there was a large proportion of waste.

4478. From that experiment do you think it can be made successfully here? I shall be making a further lot within the next fortnight—50 or 60 tons. The last lot was only 15 tons.

4479. Have you any particular class of cattle among your dairy cows, such as Ayrshires or Jerseys? I have a few pure Ayrshires; but only one in milk at the present time.

4480. From your experience during the time you have been carrying on dairying, do you think it can be successfully carried on in this district? I think it can.

4481. That the climatic conditions are in no way opposed to its success? Not opposed to making good butter, but to keeping it after it is made.

4482. Have you experienced any difficulty in conveying it to market? I sell it all in the district, and have no difficulty in getting it here.

4483. Supposing you made more than you could sell locally, and found it necessary to export it to Townsville, are the facilities for transit encouraging to the industry? Not at present. The very reverse.

4484. What do you principally grow on the twelve acres you have cultivated? Sorghum, maize, and sweet potatoes.

4485. You have never grown cane or other tropical products, or tropical fruits? We have mangoes. I have thirty mango trees, half of which are in bearing; pineapples, guavas, and granadillas. I have most of the ordinary tropical fruits.

4486. Have you grown oranges and limes and lemons? Limes and lemons and citrons, but I have only one orange tree.

4487. How do the limes and lemons and citrons succeed? They grow like weeds. The limes are simply rotting in tons.

4488. Have you never tried to export them? I have not exported any. The freights from here to Dungeness, and the intermediate charges, wharfage, &c., are equal to the value of the crop.

4489. You are aware that in Brisbane there is an unlimited demand for limes? I was not aware of it. We are cut off completely from the rest of the world here. In the first place, we have to get our produce down the river at a large amount of expense and risk. Fruit may be detained a week at Dungeness, lying in the hot sun all the time, and consequently it would not pay to take it any further. The transshipment at Townsville is another great objection. Goods are frequently left there a week waiting for the following steamer.

4490. Have you attempted the cultivation of the grape? I have not. My neighbours have grown the American varieties very successfully.

4491. The same difficulty in disposing of other produce would apply to grapes? Yes.

4492. Have you thought over any way by which the condition of agriculture can be improved in this district, and can you offer any suggestions? The general opinion amongst people like myself is that the only remedy for the average selector is a railway to Townsville. Some are in favour of a railway to Dungeness. They think it would open up larger markets. The general impression throughout the district, especially in the quarter in which I reside, is that railway communication with Townsville would open

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open up the markets of Charters Towers, Ravenswood, Hughenden, and Townsville. It would enable us to put our produce into the market at once, and at reasonable prices. The element of uncertainty which now enters so largely into the delivery of goods would then be done away with.

4493. It has been suggested that the construction of a jetty at Lucinda Point to deep water to admit of vessels coming straight to a wharf there, and then having a tramway formed direct to Ingham, would assist farmers: but, in your opinion, would a railway from here to Townsville direct be preferable? In my opinion it would.

4494. You would then get rid of the uncertainty of the arrival and departure of steamers, and of transhipment? Yes.

4495. For the butter industry, would not the railway direct to Townsville be preferable? Decidedly preferable. Goods, such as fruit and ordinary farm produce, are not knocked about nearly so much in railway transit as in the steamers.

4496. In the event of a railway being constructed from Townsville to Ingham, do you think the area of cultivation would be largely increased? I think it would be very much increased.

4497. And there would be a larger output of agricultural produce? Very much larger.

4498. *By Mr. King*: You have never grown any cane for the mills? No.

4499. Is your land in a locality where you could supply cane to the mills? No; the nearest plantation is Hamleigh, some five or six miles distant.

4500. Have you grown coffee? Not here.

4501. Nor tobacco? Not here. I grew them both at Cairns a few years ago.

4502. How did they answer at Cairns? The coffee plants bore very well; but I disposed of the place just about the time the fruit was ripening.

4503. Had you any quantity of land under coffee? No; we had about thirty or forty trees. The tobacco also did fairly well. The price obtained for it in Brisbane was 8s. a lb. It ranged from 6d. to 8d.

4504. And how much per acre did you gather? I do not recollect the quantity. There was not much altogether—only two or three acres.

4505. Would it be a paying crop to grow? Not with white labour. I attempted it with white labour there, and it did not pay expenses.

4506. If you were enabled to employ kanakas, do you think it would pay? I think it would on a larger scale. The tobacco I grew was sent to Hocker in Brisbane, and he said it was fairly good.

4507. *By Mr. Cawley*: You are Government Surveyor in this district? I am.

4508. Have you a thorough knowledge of the character of all this country? I think I am as well acquainted with it as any one in the district.

4509. Do you consider it capable of carrying a large farming population, given the communication you speak of? Yes.

4510. Do fowls do well here? Very well, indeed.

4511. And fruits of all kinds? Fruit can be grown very readily—not only tropical fruits, but a good many of the fruits that belong essentially to temperate climates, such as peaches.

4512. Do you know whether among your fellow-farmers the one great drawback is want of communication—is that the only drawback? Those who are going in for growing cane complain of want of labour.

4513. I am speaking more particularly now of the small farmers—the homestead selectors? Want of market appears to be the principal difficulty.

4514. What would be the rate between here and Townsville if the railway was constructed? Presuming it was the same as on other lines, it would be about 12s. 6d. a ton.

4515. What is the freight to Townsville now? £2 10s. a ton.

4516. Would the difference between the railway rates and the £2 10s. induce people to cultivate the land and grow different products? I think it would—sweet potatoes, for example. They produce on fair land from 10 to 15 tons an acre; at £2 10s. a ton, they would pay very well.

4517. Will they grow all the year round? They will, but you get a better crop if you only take off one. You can continue supplying throughout the whole year.

4518. Is there a ready market in Townsville for this produce? I cannot say; I believe there is. No doubt there would be if they could be delivered at a reasonable price. When you have to add £2 10s. on as freight, people do not care about buying.

4519. Are there white men growing sweet potatoes in this district for the planters who can make a profit by selling at £2 10s. a ton? There are white men growing them, but I do not know the price they obtain. I think it is a little more than that.

4520. Are you Chairman of the Divisional Board here? I am.

4521. Can you give us any idea of the amount of rates paid by the planters in this district? The rates collected in the division of Hinchinbrook from 1884 to 1887 have averaged £1,328 14s. 3½d. per annum, out of which amount the plantations have paid an average of £808 0s. 10½d. per annum. The total during the four years, rates and endowment, amounted to £15,944 11s. 6d., which, without the rates from the plantations and the endowment, would only have amounted to £6,272 1s.

4522. The plantations have been the backbone of the divisional board? Undoubtedly. The area of the division is 830 square miles. Five plantations with an area of about 31 square miles have contributed over 60 per cent. of the rates.

4523. In addition to this direct contribution, they are largely to be credited with indirect contributions? Very largely. The prosperity of the district is dependent directly and indirectly upon the sugar industry. In fact most of the settlers derive their living from working on the plantations or supplying them with produce, fencing, and other material.

4524. *By the Chairman*: What labour are you employing? I employ three white men and one Chinaman.

4525. When you speak of the rates obtained from the plantations, of course, if the land was not in the occupation of planters, it would still be assessed by the divisional board? Yes; but the rates I speak of were largely collected upon improvements.

4526. You do not assess machinery now? No, simply the land.

4527. Have you any suggestions to offer on the labour question by which the interests of the district may be promoted—or, in other words, do you think there is a sufficient European population in the district to supply the necessary labour required? No, certainly not. My experience of white labour, as a surveyor, is that for every good man you get you find ten who either cannot or will not work.

4528. *By*

4528. *By Mr. King*: Have you ever found that your men complain of the heat of the summer or find it necessary to knock off work? Yes, they complain a great deal of the heat. A great many men cannot stand outdoor work. W. T. White.
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4529. Do you find that on account of the heat you are sometimes unable to proceed with your work? Yes.
4530. As chairman of the Divisional Board, have you known instances of Divisional Board labourers knocking off on account of the heat? All the work for the Divisional Board is done by contract, but the contractors have complained to me that they are unable to get men to work. They will work for a few hours and then throw the work up.

4531. There is a bridge at present being erected near Mount Cordelia. Are you aware whether the men have been knocked off there lately on account of the heat? No; I do not know.

4532. *By the Chairman*: Is it a condition in the Divisional Board contracts that the contractors shall employ nothing but white labour? It is.

4533. What is the average rate of wages paid to white labour, working on Divisional Board works? About a year ago we had a road party and the rate of wages were 4s. 6d. a day and rations.

4534. You do not know the rate of wages paid by contractors to their workmen? A great deal of the work is done by sub-contract.

4535. Are any of the contractors farmers living in the district? Most of them are.

4536. *By Mr. King*: Do the men who are holding small farms in the district make a living off their farms, or only reside there and make a living at other occupations? Some of them make a living on their farms; the majority of small selectors I imagine do not. They take odd jobs on the plantations or on the roads.

4537. How do the men who make a living on their farms dispose of their produce? The plantations as a rule buy the produce.

4538. *By the Chairman*: Speaking from your knowledge as district surveyor, is there much agricultural land still unselected? Not a great deal.

4539. Would the construction of a railway from Townsville to Ingham open up any additional agricultural land that could be selected? People would select and cultivate a great deal of land which would scarcely come under the head of agricultural land, as they do in other places. You really cannot tell what class of land selectors will take a fancy to. A great many take up land that I would consider the greatest rubbish.

4540. You are acquainted with the Herbert River and its various tributaries? Yes.

4541. Are there any selections still left on the banks of these streams? There is no unselected land on the banks of the Herbert within thirty miles of Ingham.

4542. *By Mr. King*: How far does the district extend—does it include Cardwell? Yes; it includes and goes twenty-five miles above Cardwell.

4543. Does it include the Tully? Yes.

4544. *By Mr. Cowley*: Does it include Clump Point? Yes; that is the boundary.

4545. *By Mr. King*: Are you able to say whether there is a large area of freehold land unoccupied in the district? There is a large area of freehold land which is leased at low rentals, and some of it unoccupied. The owners make nothing out of it.

4546. *By the Chairman*: Are there any large areas which have been selected and the conditions fulfilled, and which have remained unoccupied after that, either on the Herbert or Tully Rivers? Yes; on the Tully, and on the Herbert also, there are selections of that nature.

4547. *By Mr. King*: What is the area of land on the Tully in that condition? There must be several thousand acres. I should say at least 8,000 or 10,000 acres.

4548. Are you acquainted with the Tully? I have been surveying on the Tully.

4549. What is the character of the land there? Very good.

4550. Scrub? Very heavy scrub. There are also plains. A great deal is subject to inundation, but it is very rich.

4551. Are there any resident selectors on the Tully? Yes; a good number.

4552. How many? I have not been there within the last six years. I cannot say how many there are, but I know there are a considerable number of residents.

4553. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say there is not much agricultural land available for selection at present. Is there much agricultural land in the district which could be brought under cultivation, given labour and communication? Yes.

4554. Could you form any idea of the amount of agricultural land still uncultivated? I should say that there would be upwards of 100,000 acres which could be cultivated.

4555. Do you think this is a district in which dairying and agriculture could be combined? I think it is. I can only speak from my own experience with regard to dairying and agriculture. I had very little knowledge of either before I came here. Last year I sold 4,655 lbs. of butter, the receipts for which amounted to £414.

4556. And you followed your occupation as surveyor during that time? There was very little surveying to do, but yet I did something at surveying as well.

4557. Given communication and labour would you increase your area under cultivation? I would.

4558. Very materially? Yes; I should gradually increase it tenfold. In fact, I should endeavour to convert my holding into a central factory and encourage farmers round about to produce the milk and bring it in.

4559. You would continue agriculture and fruit growing? Certainly.

4560. You are satisfied with what you have done so far, from a pecuniary point of view? Yes; but I could produce double and treble the quantity with a very small addition of labour had I a more extended market. I am satisfied so far with the profits I have made.

4561. So far as you are concerned it is want of communication only that prevents you extending your operations? Yes.

4562. *By the Chairman*: As matters stand at present it is impossible for you to prepare calves or breed pigs for the Townsville market? Quite impossible, owing to the difficulty and cost of transit.

4563. That would be in addition to the agriculture of the district? Yes.

4564. At present you are not able to do that? No.

4565. Then

W. T. White. 4565. Then a great deal of your milk goes to waste? I feed calves on the skimmed milk, but it would be more profitable to feed pigs. With regard to the capabilities of the district I may mention that, in addition to the stock belonging to the district, we had here during the late drought, from August until Christmas, at least 12,000 head of cattle from the tablelands, where the drought was most severe.

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4566. They were grazed here without any detriment to the local cattle? With very little detriment. Had the fences been better the cattle could have been controlled, and not allowed to spoil so much grass by running about over it.

4567. Were these cattle grazed on terms or did they come to plunder the grass? They might have come to plunder, but the grass had to be paid for when they went away.

4568. As soon as the rains came in December, these cattle were taken back to their homes? Yes; I have no doubt that their visit to this district saved the lives of fully 75 per cent. of them.

WILLIAM STANLEY WARREN examined:

W.S. Warren. 4569. *By the Chairman*: You are land commissioner for the district of Ingham? I am.

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4571. *By Mr. King*: Are you also Crown lands ranger? Yes; I am land agent and Crown lands ranger as well.

4572. *By the Chairman*: Will you be kind enough to read the return? There were 93 selections taken up under the Land Act of 1868 and made freehold of an aggregate area of 55,432 acres; under the same Act there were 6 selections forfeited, of an aggregate area of 1,000 acres; there were 62 conditional selections taken up under the Land Act of 1876, and made freehold, of an aggregate area of 58,536 acres; 80 homesteads were taken up under the Land Act of 1876, and have been made freehold, of an aggregate area of 12,481 acres; there were 52 volunteer land orders, each of 50 acres, of an aggregate area of 2,600 acres. Under the Land Act of 1876 there were 57 conditional selections, not yet made freehold, of an aggregate area of 47,451 acres; and 17 homesteads, not yet made freehold, of an aggregate area of 2,719 acres. Under the Act of 1878 there were 23 conditional selections forfeited, representing 17,134 acres; and there were 14 homesteads forfeited, representing 2,167 acres. Under the Act of 1884 there have been 67 agricultural farms taken up, comprising 22,994 acres, and 8 rejected of a total area of 2,868 acres. Of the area of land now under sugar cane, the Colonial Sugar Company have 2,923 acres; F. and A. Neame, 690 acres; Wood Bros. and Boyd, of Ripple Creek, 720 acres; Wittingham Bros. of Hamleigh, 500 acres; and there are 16 selectors with an aggregate of 1,100 acres. That is an aggregate of 5,933 acres under cane. The approximate area of land under cultivation and not under cane, held under the Land Act of 1876, is about 400 acres, and the approximate area of land held under the Land Act of 1884 under cultivation, exclusive of sugar cane, is 50 acres. There are 5,933 acres under cane; 450 under general cultivation; 129,049 acres freehold; 73,164 acres leasehold; and 20,301 acres are forfeited in this district.

4573. Has the forfeited land been re-opened for selection? Yes.

4574. And has it been re-selected? In some cases it has been re-selected.

4575. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you any idea of how much of the forfeited land is re-open for selection? The forfeited selections now open in this district amount to about 4,500 acres.

4576. And what is the character of the land? The character of the land is fair.

4577. Has it a water frontage? No; it is nearly all back country.

4578. Can you give us an idea of the number of selections on which the conditions have been fulfilled and the freehold obtained, and the land then abandoned? All the land is used. In this district there is no land that you can call abandoned. In many cases, of course, it has been made freehold. The improvements may have been removed and the land used for grazing purposes; but I cannot say that it is abandoned.

4579. *By Mr. King*: Mr. Cowley means land with no residents on? After the selections are made freehold the bailiff is removed, and the land goes back into grazing land.

4580. *By the Chairman*: That is exactly what we want to know from you? There is a great deal of country in that state.

4581. Have any of the improvements been removed? In most cases they have been left upon the ground, and in many cases gone to destruction.

4582. *By Mr. King*: Have they been removed in any cases? Not since I have been here.

4583. *By the Chairman*: You do not know of fruit trees that have done duty for one selection being transferred to another? No; I do not.

4584. As I understand you, the selections on which the conditions have been carried out and the freeholds obtained have been leased for grazing purposes after the bailiff has been removed? Yes; the land goes back to grass. All this land was part of a run before, and a great many of the selections have been bought back by the runholder and have gone back into cattle.

4585. *By Mr. King*: With regard to the scrub selections, are there not a number of them unoccupied? There are, but they are not abandoned.

4586. They are not occupied? Not occupied.

4587. What is the area of those freeholds on the Tully River? Over 5,000 acres.

4284. What is the total area of freehold? Between 20,000 and 30,000 acres.

4289. Who are the principal holders of these freeholds? Mr. James Tyson.

4590. How much has he got? I consider that he is interested in over 25,000 acres. By means of the volunteer land orders that I mentioned, he has taken up frontages to the Tully. There was a selection of over 5,000 acres that he took up himself. Then his two nephews and Mr. Macdonald-Paterson's and Mr. Brooks's selections have fallen into his hands.

4591. Are these selections occupied at the present time? There are two selections occupied at the present time. Isaac Henry and Brooks are still on their selections.

4592. On the Herbert River is there any large area of scrub freehold unoccupied? No.

4593. Is there not a considerable area of scrub land between Macnade and Ripple Creek plantations? There is no large area of scrub freehold unoccupied.

4594. *By Mr. Cowley*: That land between Macnade and Ripple Creek is occupied, is it not? I consider it is in possession of selectors. W.S. Warren.
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4595. Is it sub-leased in any way? There are no selections between Ripple Creek and Macnade that are unoccupied.
4596. *By the Chairman*: Do you know the site of the tobacco plantation that is there? Yes; that is higher up the river.
4597. In whose occupation is that land? You can call that abandoned.
4598. Are you acquainted with the 57 conditional selections not yet made freehold, amounting to 47,450 acres? Yes.
4599. Are the conditions now being fulfilled? Yes.
4600. Is the land in small or large holdings? From 320 up to 1,280 acres.
4601. Are the conditions being fulfilled by the original selectors, or by bailiff? By bailiff.
4602. All of them? With the exception of one or two.
4603. Are the selectors residents of the district or absentees? In some cases absentees.
4604. Have any of the 67 agricultural farmstaken up under the Land Act of 1884 water frontages? No water frontages to the Herbert but in some cases to creeks running into the Herbert.
4605. Is there any large area of land open now for selection as agricultural farms? In this district there are about 26,800 acres. In the parish of Tyson there are 80 square miles; in the parish of Menuga, 28 square miles; in the parish of Rockingham, 120 square miles; and on the Hull River 9 square miles.
4606. Is the whole of that open for agricultural farms or for grazing areas? For agricultural farms up to the extent of 1,280 acres.
4607. Is there much demand for land just now? There is not. I may mention that there was more demand last year than there was before.
4608. What is the character of the land now open? The depth of the soil is about 6 inches on a clay subsoil and moderately timbered. The 80 square miles on the Tyson comprises some very excellent land either for agriculture or for grazing, and I can say the same so far as the 28 square miles in the parish of Menuga, the 120 square miles in the parish of Rockingham, and on the banks of the river are concerned. As you go back you may call it fair grazing land. The frontage to the Hull is very good, but as you go back it is subject to flood.
4609. Admitting that selectors were to apply for agricultural farms in the localities you have named, how would the farmers get their produce to market? The only way in which they could bring it would be by shipping.
4610. Are any of the rivers you have named navigable? The Tully is not navigable except by small boats. The Murray is navigable for boats drawing 6 feet of water for thirty miles. Both the south and north branches of the Hull are navigable for boats drawing 6 feet of water; these are all "barred" rivers.
4611. Are there no public roads? There are no roads, and in flood time the rivers are impassable. I have had to swim across both the Murray and Tully rivers.
4612. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say that many of the selections are abandoned—is it not a fact that many of them have been sold to the planters and other proprietors? Yes; I never said that many of the selections were abandoned, I said "unoccupied."
4613. They have been consolidated, so to speak? Yes.
4614. You said there were some scrub selections abandoned, are they solely on the Tully or on the Herbert? On the Tully.
4615. You say that the selections now held under conditional purchases are in some cases owned by absentees—are a large proportion owned by absentees or are a large proportion owned by residents on the river—does that refer more particularly to this river or to other portions of the district? I refer of course to my district generally.
4616. As far as this district of Ingham is concerned? As far as this district is concerned. My answer must only be approximate. I can give you a decided answer in a few minutes. About a quarter of them are owned by absentees.
4617. Do you know whether there is much land leased to Chinamen in the district? No; I do not. I believe there is some leased, but it is leased by private persons.
4618. It is all freehold land—have you as land commissioner leased any on behalf of the Government? None.
4619. What land is leased to Chinese is freehold land belonging to the settlers? Leased by private persons.
4620. Have you ever made an estimate as to the number of acres of agricultural land in the Ingham district proper? No; I have not.
4621. Can you form any idea of the percentage of agricultural land in the district? Without making any calculation I should say about 120,000 acres.

CHARLES ARBUTHNOT FOSTER examined:

4622. *By the Chairman*: You are the Polynesian Inspector for this district? Yes. C. A. Foster.
1 Feb., 1889.
4623. What is the number of Polynesians employed in the whole of your district? A total of 726, including the exemption ticket men, that I know of, and some men who were not under agreement at the time the returns were made up.
4624. You have prepared a return of the number of Pacific Islanders, and the names of their employers? Yes.
4625. The return is corrected from official sources? Yes; I intend to send a copy of it to the head office as the official return from the district.
4626. Do you pay periodical visits to the plantations? Yes.
4627. In what condition are most of the islanders that you have inspected? On most of the plantations they are, I consider, in fairly good order. There is one plantation that I cannot say quite the same for, but there may be causes for that difference.
4628. Have the islanders ever made any complaints to you of ill-treatment or want of proper food? Occasionally.
4629. Have you investigated the complaints? I have. 4630. And

- C. A. Foster. 4630. And what have you discovered? With regard to food I have found generally that there has been sufficient, but the food has not been given to the islanders at the times that they required it. Complaints have been made to me that they get no bread at dinner time, and sometimes no meat, but only potatoes.
- 1 Feb., 1889. 4631. When complaints of this nature have been made to you, have you represented it to the employer, and sought redress? I have.
4632. With what result? With the result lately that at Victoria Plantation meat was added to the potatoes at dinner time, but bread is not given.
4633. Have any complaints been made to you of ill-treatment? Occasionally boys have come to me.
4634. Have you investigated the cases? I have.
4635. Have you found the charges well founded? Not as a rule.
4636. Are they numerous? Not numerous.
4637. Were the complaints against employers or against overseers? Against overseers.
4638. When investigating these charges do the employers give you every facility for doing so? Yes.
4639. What has been the state of health of the kanakas since you have been here? Generally very good, except lately on one particular plantation. I have a return showing the death rate on the different plantations for three years.
4640. Have you found that the kanakas are supplied with liquor? I have frequently heard of it. I have not often seen them drunk myself.
4641. Have you ever prosecuted any one for supplying liquor? Yes; I have a return of prosecutions. It has been a very difficult thing to prosecute. From what I can gather they can be supplied easily by giving money to white men, Chinese, or Malays.
4642. Have you any suggestions to make by which the dietary scale can be improved or the condition of the islanders improved in any way? Yes I have. I have thought the matter over very carefully. The improvements I would suggest would be that at each meal $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of bread should be given to each islander. I think a pound of meat, when reduced by cooking, will give each islander from 3 oz. to 4 oz. of meat to each meal. The Act does not say whether the meat is to be with bone or raw meat, and I have found it given sometimes in very small quantities. Again, I would point out that the very large influx of Polynesians in the hospital is, as far as I can judge, to a considerable extent due to want of good water. Considering that the men are at work from sunrise to sunset, the allowance of tea and sugar stipulated for by the Government is sufficient to give each man employed, a good drink of tea at every meal, which at present they are not supplied with. I suggest that every Polynesian shall have a pint of tea morning, noon, and night. I think that tea is one of the greatest restoratives that the working labourer can have, and it is also a preservative against diarrhoea and dysentery. Then again you must remember that the Act permits islanders to be introduced here at the age of sixteen, and I can show you at least twenty islanders who if they are sixteen, all I can say is that they are not fit to do a day's work. They are the merest boys, and I think it would be for the benefit of everyone engaged in the labour trade if the standard age was raised. There is a difficulty in saying whether a boy is fourteen or fifteen or sixteen, but if you raise the standard there would be no such difficulty.
4643. If there is a difficulty at sixteen, would the difficulty not be equally as great at eighteen? At eighteen he is manifestly a man in this climate.
4644. If I tell you that Dr. Macdonald has assured us that he is of opinion that none of the boys are less than sixteen years of age, I take it for granted that you would accept his opinion as being correct? I must not controvert a medical opinion more than I can help, but in this very warm climate youth develops very quickly. I am only speaking as a judge of labourers. I can pick out at least twenty boys who are not fit to go into the field to labour, and I find they are put into gangs with strong men. With regard to clothing there is no stipulation as to when it is to be served out. The planters say that the Act allows them to serve it out when they like, but I think it should be served out at equal dates.
4645. By Mr. Cooley: You say that the food should be given differently from the way in which it is now given? Occasionally. There are places where the food is given satisfactorily, but there is one place where it has been far from satisfactory. In fact it is a moot point whether the men's constitutions may not have been lowered. I know that for the men on Victoria the mid-day meal has been nothing else but sweet potatoes and water.
4646. Have you ever prosecuted in any case where there has been an insufficient supply of food? No I do not think so. The cases always have been considered and remedied.
4647. Have you not been assured by the persons in charge of Victoria that they give more than the Government standard of meat to their men? I think that has been stated.
4648. Your only complaint is that they do not get enough at a certain time? Yes; not properly regulated.
4649. There have been some cases of ill-treatment—have you prosecuted? There were one or two prosecutions. I prosecuted lately.
4650. On the complaint of the boy? Yes, and very good evidence besides. I investigated the complaint.
4651. Were these cases tried by the local bench? Yes.
4652. Were they dismissed? Not all of them. In one case soon after I came here one gentleman was fined.
4653. In the cases lately decided did the bench rule that they were frivolous? The bench dismissed the cases. I have had a case lately and I wrote to the manager. It was very clearly proved. The man came into me with his temple cut with a hoe. He had been struggling with a man because he had been struck with a cane. Two little boys also complained. I wrote to the manager and asked him to see that the overseer did not administer punishment.
4654. I see that you give in your returns the number of deaths in 1886, as thirty-seven? Yes. I have been looking over the total deaths.
4655. That is taken from the official record? Yes; there is a slight discrepancy between the doctor's return and mine.
4656. You have only thirty-seven in 1886 against the doctor's forty-one? Yes; the fact is that I have gone by the butts of the death reports.
4657. You have been a sugar-grower yourself? I have.
4658. Where were you growing sugar? On the Mary River.
4659. Do you find this a healthy climate for the men? Yes; quite.

4660. How many years' experience had you in sugar-growing? Between eight and nine years.
4661. From your experience do you think it is possible to grow sugar by white labour? Well, it is not possible to grow it profitably with white labour—not at present.
4662. Have the kanakas ever given you any reason why they do not come to this district in larger numbers? No; they have never given any reason.
4663. I mean why they do not come from the islands? They have never given me any reason. I had reasons given to me in Mackay, but never in this district.
4664. Then you know of no local cause which prevents more islanders coming from the South Sea Islands to this district? None whatever.
4665. *By the Chairman:* Did you speak to the owners of the plantations about these twenty boys whom you think are under age? I have pointed them out to the owners as not fit to work, and have asked them once or twice if they had a convalescent gang of light labourers to put them in it. Until lately I could not find there was such a thing. I hear now that such a gang has been established on Victoria. Men who cannot do full work are put into a gang by themselves.
4666. Are you satisfied now that these boys will not be subject to hardship by doing work equal to that of mature boys? I am of opinion there is an improvement. I would not like to say that I could not go into a gang and pick out boys of the kind I speak of. If I did it would appear as if I was interfering with the manager's management.
4667. *By Mr. Cowley:* These twenty boys were passed by both the Government agent and the health officer? Yes.
4668. When you talk about men working in gangs you know that although they do work in gangs it is very rarely that any two men do the same amount of work. They are not forced to work to a certain standard? I cannot tell you about that; I think that the supervision of labourers has been pretty continuous at Victoria. I think it has eased off, but it has been pretty close. The crushing season has been continuous, and there has been no spell.
4669. Has it come under your knowledge that a gang of men have been compelled to do an equal amount of work all round? I cannot say it has come under my notice lately, but when I was investigating the complaint about a man being struck with a hoe, I found that the overseer had induced this young boy to keep up with the others by a blow from a bit of cane, which was said to be dead cane, and it gave me the impression that he required the boys to work up to one another, instead of straggling back in the rows.
4670. In cases of prosecution for grog selling, do the employers render you every assistance? Yes; I have never had any difficulty in getting assistance. I have only prosecuted in one case.
4671. Do you know whether the employers are desirous of putting a stop to grog selling, or do they encourage it? I am perfectly certain that they wish to put a stop to it.

TUESDAY, 5 FEBRUARY, 1889.

BURDEKIN (TOWNSVILLE) DISTRICT.

(At the Burdekin.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

WILLIAM PAYARD examined:

4672. *By the Chairman:* You are a selector? I am.
4673. How many acres have you? 220.
4674. How many years have you held it? Nine years last September.
4675. How many acres have you under cultivation? Twenty-one acres with irrigation, and twenty-nine without irrigation—fifty acres in all.
4676. What crops do you chiefly grow? Maize and sweet potatoes.
4677. What is the average yield of maize per acre? It varies very much. With irrigation I have had 45 bushels to the acre. I do not think it has averaged more than 35 or 40 bushels at the outside.
4678. Owing to the continued drought you have adopted the system of irrigation? Yes.
4679. What was the total cost of your machinery? £260, reckoning everything.
4680. *By Mr. King:* What kind of pump do you use? A 5-inch centrifugal pump by Tangye.
4681. What is the horse-power of the engine? It is a six-horse power engine.
4682. How many gallons of water does it throw per hour? It is guaranteed to throw 10,000 gallons, but I have been informed that it has gone up to 35,000 gallons per hour.
4683. What height have you to raise the water? From 29 to 30 feet as near as possible.
4684. How many acres per day do you reckon you can irrigate with that power? For crop I can irrigate three acres, but as a rule I have never done more than two acres, because I allow the waste water to go on to the pasture for the stock.
4685. That is working your engine twelve hours a day? Yes.
4686. What do you reckon the cost per acre of watering your land? About 5s., as near as possible.
4687. How often do you find it necessary to water the crop in a dry season? I water the land first and plough it and then I water it three times afterwards for a crop of maize. I do not know that it is necessary to put on the fourth watering, but I have done so.
4688. Do you find that has a good result? Yes; a very good result. I am well satisfied with it. The only mistake I made was that I planted a lot of American corn that the Griffith Government got out, and it was a great success, but then I planted a lot of the old maize and the blight got into it and there is no crop at all.

4689. You

C. A. Foster.

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W. Payard.

5 Feb., 1889.

- W. Payard. 4689. You consider then that it pays you to irrigate? I am quite certain that it does.
4690. Where do you sell your corn? Chiefly to Drysdale Brothers, Pioneer Plantation.
- 5 Feb., 1889. 4691. What is the average price obtained in this district? The lowest I ever got was 4s. and the highest 5s. 6d.
4692. Supposing that the plantations were shut up where would you dispose of your produce then? In Townsville.
4693. What means have you of taking it to Townsville? Only the boats.
4694. What would it cost you to get it to Townsville? I have sent some; I sent three tons once, but I believe I was overcharged. I paid 22s. 6d. a ton freight from Barratta Creek and 5s. a ton from here to the creek, 5s. a ton at the other end for receiving and delivery, 3s. for cartage, and 2½ per cent. discount; something like £2 10s. on a ton of maize.
4695. Then you must have lost over 1s. a bushel? 1s. 3d. They called it a cash transaction, but I had to wait something like five months before I got any money. It was done through Apin, Brown, and Co.
4696. It would affect the selectors of this district considerably if the plantations ceased to buy from them? There would be no doubt that a lot would have to stop. They do not grow sufficient to make it worth their while to send away. The expense of sending small quantities away would consume the profit.
4697. Have you tried any other crops besides maize and sweet potatoes? I have tried English potatoes.
4698. Did they do well here? Yes, they grew well enough.
4699. How much per acre? The largest crop we got was 3½ tons per acre.
4700. What price did you get for them? 12s. a cwt.
4701. What is the average crop that sweet potatoes yield? I could not say.
4702. You can give a rough guess? I saw a report of someone having had 40 tons to the acre. I think we had about as good a crop as anyone, and we only got 8 or 9 tons per acre.
4703. What price did you get for them? I have only sold a few, and they fetched £2 a ton; now, I suppose, they are about 8s. or 10s. a cwt. I was told they were something like 14s. or 15s. in Townsville now.
4704. Have you tried experiments with tobacco, coffee, or any articles of that kind? I tried a few coffee trees, but I did not pay much heed to them. I thought it was not worth while. There are three or four trees growing now, which look very healthy.
4705. Do they bear well? They are too young yet.
4706. You never tried tobacco? I have a few plants. It grows a tremendous height, and there are good leaves on the trees, but I have no experience of it. I do not know whether it is good or bad.
4707. Is there a great deal of land in this district that could be irrigated? Yes; there is a good deal, as far as I have seen, and I have seen the biggest part of it. It could be irrigated either by means of wells or the lagoons. There are a lot of selectors on this bank, and, although they have the water, they have no means of erecting pumps.
4708. How many selections are there in this district, not counting the sugar plantations? I could not say how many. There are somewhere about thirty up this way—I should say between forty and fifty altogether, from homestead selectors up to those holding 640 acres.
4709. Is there any dairy farming carried on? Yes, a little. I do a little myself.
4710. Where do they sell their produce? Generally to the stores in the townships of Ayr and Brandon.
- Mr. Irving buys a lot of it.
4711. Does he buy it for the Townsville market? Yes; and he sends it right out west as far as Hughenden.
4712. Are the farmers in this district well off in the way of communication? We have not got good communication with the markets. We are pretty well scattered about, and those who have butter and such things to sell have fair communication, but there are a lot who do not bother about it.
4713. The only communication with Townsville is by steamer? That is all.
4714. How often does the steamer run? At crushing time it depends upon the tides. They run pretty frequently then, but now only once a fortnight.
4715. You cannot send fresh butter away once a fortnight? No, only salt butter. We are greatly handicapped for want of a railway.
4716. Would there be more settlement and more cultivation in the district if you had a railway? There is not the slightest doubt about it.
4717. Your maize suffers from the blight? It did two years ago and again this year. The American corn that the Griffith Government imported did not suffer at all. We had a very good crop from it.
4718. Does the blight attack the irrigated land as well as the other? It did in this case. It is a thing I do not understand. I have three acres fearfully blighted. I did not get a bag of maize off the three acres, and on both sides of it there is a really good crop.
4719. You have never discovered any cure for the blight? No, none whatever. I have a piece of land of about seven acres, and the other morning I went down there and all the tops of the corn were as white as could be. My experience is that it is the drizzling rain that causes the mildew and makes the corn die out.
4720. By the Chairman: What labour do you employ? Generally two white men—a man who has been a few months in the country and my brother. For irrigating purposes I find the Chinaman is far the best.
4721. You do not employ any coloured labour? None whatever.
4722. By Mr. Cawley: Except Chinamen? Yes, I believe Chinamen are called coloured labourers, and I have employed them at times for irrigating because I believe they are the best.
4723. By the Chairman: Have you a garden? Yes, a small garden.
4724. Do you find orange and peach trees grow well here? Yes, and mangoes grow wonderfully well.
4725. During the drought, supposing you had not gone in for irrigation, what position would your selection have been in? It would have been in a very critical position.
4726. From your experience of irrigation, would you strongly recommend it to other farmers? Yes, I would.
4727. You are perfectly satisfied that it pays? It has paid me handsomely.
4728. Are you satisfied with your prospects as a selector? Yes, well satisfied.

W. Payard.
By
5 Feb., 1899.

4729. Is the district healthy? Yes, so far as my experience goes.
4730. In what way do you think the agricultural interests of this district can be improved? By railway communication as much as anything else. In fact, that is the great thing that is wanted. Then I am certain that a good many of the farmers who have lagoons would go in for irrigation.
4731. In what direction would you wish the railway to go? Townsville is the chief market. I would like it to go as close as possible—it would be all the less expense for us.
4732. Would taking the railway to Townsville open up the markets of Charters Towers, Hughenden, and the western districts? Well, I do not think it would make much difference. I think it would open the markets up there. We could send our produce either one way or the other. The cost would not be a great deal, supposing the junction was at the 6-mile or the 14-mile. I think myself that for the benefit of the farmers in the district the line by Woodstock would be the best.
4733. By Mr. Cowley: You have two white men and a Chinaman here; what wages do you pay to the white man? £1 a week, and 18s. to the Chinaman.
4734. How much do you allow for your own wages? I get the bulk of the produce taken off the field. That is my profit.
4735. Do you attend to the engine yourself? Yes; I help to do so.
4736. What do you think your own labour is worth? 30s. a week.
4737. And your tucker? Yes; I would not like to take it all the same.
4738. By Mr. King: You make more than that? I hope to do.
4739. By Mr. Cowley: Could you give us the cash returns, per acre, from your land for the last year? No; I could not.
4740. How much cord wood do you use per day? Two loads a day.
4741. That would be about a cord? It would be more than a cord for the two loads.
4742. What is that worth per cord—what would you cut the wood for, per cord, if you were selling it to anyone? About 7s. or 8s.
4743. Supposing you were cutting it from the forest timber in the bush, how much per cord would you cut it for in 2-foot lengths? I could not say; I have not had any experience.
4744. Would it pay you at £1 a cord? Yes, well. I said I could cut it at 8s.
4745. I mean delivered at the engine? About 15s. a cord.
4746. And you burn 15s. worth of firewood per day? I do not know that it requires so much as that.
4747. By Mr. King: Do you use split wood or fallen timber? Just the fallen timber. It does not cost me anything like that.
4748. By Mr. Cowley: Is it worth 7s. 6d. a load, delivered? No; it is not, because a man can gather about eight loads a day. He could do that comfortably and not hurry himself. The man is getting £1 a week, and the horse's feed would come to about the same. The horse's feed and the man would be worth about £2 a week. He could gather as much wood in a day as would last me four days.
4749. Can you not reduce it to figures and tell us the actual consumption per day? At the outside it would not cost more than 7s. a day for firewood to irrigate three acres.
4750. How many men does it employ? A Chinaman in the field and a man to do the driving.
4751. That is yourself at 30s., and a Chinaman at 18s.? Yes.
4752. What does the other man do? He has nothing to do with the irrigating.
4753. You do not keep any account of returns per acre? No.
4754. And no account of your yield per acre? No.
4755. How do you know whether it pays you to irrigate? I know I have sold fifty bags of maize now at 5s. 6d. a bushel, and I suppose I have another forty bags in the shed. I would not have had that if I had not irrigated. I know, too, what the wages of the white man and Chinaman come to.
4756. You keep a rough account in your head? Yes; I never book it.
4757. You are convinced that these twenty acres are paying you—you are paying your way, paying yourself 30s. a week, and you are better off than if you were employed in a billet at 30s. a week? Yes.
4758. By the Chairman: What is the condition of the selectors in the district who are not irrigating? I could not say—I have not been round for a good while.
4759. By Mr. King: Are they hard-up or thriving? They are all pretty well hard-up.
4760. By the Chairman: Do any of them grow sugar cane? Not that I know of.
4761. They are purely and simply agriculturists? Yes.
4762. By Mr. King: Has there been much loss of stock in the district through the drought? I lost a good lot—63 out of 190, and four or five have died since.
4763. Your irrigation would not help to keep your stock alive? It would keep a lot alive. I had an entire and a few mares in the paddock that I irrigated, and they kept in good condition, and ten of the best cows, besides a dozen milkers.
4764. You think the irrigation helped to save some of your stock? I am quite certain of it. It helped to save thirty head at the very least.
4765. By Mr. Cowley: When you say it cost £250 to erect the machinery does that cover every expense of carting it here and your own labour? It does not include my own labour.
4766. Does it include the labour of the skilled men? Yes, the plant cost £200 13s. 3d. landed at Barratta Creek. Then I got some packing from Mr. Drysdale, and everything, including the engineer's expenses, came up to £50 odd—that is £250 all but a few pence, independent of my own labour.
4767. How much would you estimate your own labour at? We were a fortnight at it, and £3 more might be added on.
4768. What would be the working expenses for oil and belting over and above the firewood and labour? I have used a drum of oil since I got the engine, at 4s. 6d. a gallon.
4769. How long does that last you? I started working on the 17th September, but I have been very extravagant with the oil myself. I was a beginner, and had never had anything to do with an engine, and all I could do was to run about with the oil-can.
4770. Had you the money to purchase your plant without borrowing? I had not the money in hand, but I had it growing on the field.
4771. You have paid for it? Yes.
4772. By the Chairman: Your farm is entirely free? Yes.

4773. Do

W. Payard. 4773. Do you think an experimental farm or garden in the district where farmers could get practical knowledge of the fruits and tropical productions that could be grown here would be of advantage? A great advantage.

5 Feb., 1889. 4774. Would you, as a selector, make use of it? Yes; I would indeed.

4775. Have you ever experimented yourself with particular articles? Nothing particular. I have tried sugar cane and sorghum, and I intend this year to plant oats and lucerne.

4776. What did you do with the grain that was the yield of the American maize? I sold it to Mr. Drysdale.

4777. You did not keep any of it for seed? I have some left that I intend to keep for seed.

4778. Have you ever sought advice with regard to this disease in maize? No, I have not. We have talked among ourselves, and the conclusion we have come to is that it is mildew, and is caused by the drizzling rain.

4779. Would it not be advisable to send samples of it to the Government botanist in Brisbane with a view of getting advice? I hardly know how to send it. It would certainly be worth while inquiring into.

4780. What is the nature of the soil on which the maize failed? It is a clay sub-soil.

4781. Were there any white insects in the corn? There was nothing to be seen with the naked eye.

4782. By Mr. Conley: Do you get any return off the unirrigated land? One crop a year.

4783. Your 21 acres of irrigated land has paid the expense of working the other, and leaves a profit after paying for all losses? Well, I have not gone into debt over it.

4784. You actually would be better off without the unirrigated land? Yes; I would be far better off. I ploughed it three times last year, and when I went to put the crop in I found it was too dry.

4785. The result of your experience of irrigation goes to prove that it would be cheaper for you to confine yourself to 20 or 25 acres of irrigated land than 100 acres not irrigated—that you would get a greater return from the irrigated land? Certainly.

WEDNESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY, 1889.

BURDEKIN (TOWNSVILLE) DISTRICT.

(At Kalamia Plantation.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

CHARLES YOUNG examined:

C. Young. 4786. By the Chairman: How long have you been engaged in the cultivation of sugar cane? Eight years.

6 Feb., 1889. 4787. What is the name of this estate? Kalamia.

4788. What is the total extent of it? About 7,000 acres.

4789. How much is under cultivation? About 800 acres.

4790. With sugar cane? That includes 20 acres of corn and 15 acres of potatoes.

4791. How many acres of cane were crushed last season? About 300 acres.

4792. What was the output of sugar? 140 tons.

4793. How much molasses? I cannot quite tell that yet because the last of the low sugars are not dried off. I should think about 4,000 gallons.

4794. What do you do with it? We give some to the horses and the rest we throw away.

4795. What amount of capital is invested in the estate? £90,000.

4796. What rate of interest did the estate return during 1888? It did not return any interest at all. There was a heavy loss.

4797. What were the working expenses for 1888? £9,000.

4798. Did the estate return its working expenses? It did not.

4799. What labour do you employ, specifying the number of Europeans, Chinese, kanakas, and Javanese? As a rule, about 30 Europeans, 9 Chinese, 50 Malays, and 120 kanakas. That was in 1888.

4800. Have you additional European labour during crushing? Yes.

4801. What were the average rate of wages paid to the coloured classes of labour? There are two classes of kanakas here; the time expired kanakas averaged £17, and the new chum kanakas (the boys under original agreement) averaged £6 10s. 5d. The average Chinese wage was 18s. a week; the Javanese would average 11s. a week.

4802. Board and quarters are found in addition? Yes.

4803. What was the total amount of wages paid to Europeans? £2,430.

4804. What description of labour do you consider most suitable for field work? Polynesians.

4805. Have you employed European labour in field work? Am I to understand by "field work," trashing and weeding?

4806. Yes? We have tried to get them, but have not been able, so I could not say anything about that. I may say we had a very heavy crushing here in 1887, and great difficulty in getting the crop off. We tried to get white men to take contracts for cane cutting and loading, but failed altogether.

4807. Do white men do the work with the horses in the field? Yes, white men and kanakas too.

4808. When the land is brought more readily under cultivation by means of machinery will not the number of Europeans employed be greater? Not in this case, because it is as fit now for the use of machinery as it ever will be. It is all cleared and stumped.

4809. How

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4809. How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each black labourer employed? Just about four acres.
4810. Do the blacks employed in field labour suffer in health? We do not find that they do.
4811. What is the general health of the Europeans? Very good.
4812. Does your cane suffer from the grub or any insect? No disease whatever.
4813. What was the cost of the machinery in your mill? Our mill cost about £26,000.
4814. What is the cost of the annual overhaul? A little over £200.
4815. You have to keep a number of skilled men all the year round? We have an engineer and a fitter. At crushing time we put on two or three fitters.
4816. In consequence of the drought you have had to resort to irrigation on this plantation? Yes; we irrigated here as long ago as 1855.
4817. Upon what principle do you irrigate? Pumping with centrifugal pumps.
4818. The water is conveyed to the cane in ditches? Yes; the land is bedded in 10 feet beds.
4819. What is the average cost per acre of the irrigation? For each time we water it costs about 8s. 6d. an acre.
4820. Do you find it remunerative to irrigate? Yes; there is no doubt of it.
4821. How many acres are you able to irrigate? We have 530 acres that we can command with the channels that we have now made.
4822. You find no difficulty in getting a sufficient supply of water? We have any quantity of water.
4823. Have you grown any other tropical products besides sugar? No.
4824. How many horses are there on the establishment? We generally have about 75.
4825. Where do you get the feed for them? Most of it is bought in the district from the selectors. Some we grow ourselves.
4826. What mode of transit have you for taking your sugar to market? We have a tramway down to Plantation Creek wharf.
4827. Have you any difficulty in getting the steamers? Yes; great difficulty. They are very uncertain.
4828. Is there a bar to the entrance of Plantation Creek? Yes; a shifting sand bar.
4829. Steamers can only come in at certain stages of the tide? Yes.
4830. Then railway communication would be of decided advantage to the plantation? An enormous advantage.
4831. *By Mr. King:* How often do you find it necessary to water your crop? I think it ought to be watered once in three weeks in such a drought as this. When we first began the irrigation scheme about two waterings would have carried the crop through, but in such a season as this last one, to keep the cane growing really luxuriantly, it ought to be watered once in three weeks.
4832. What description of machinery do you use for raising the water? Centrifugal pumps. We used to have a set of Fowler's steam plough tackle. We are now using the ploughing engines for irrigating. We have two 16-horse Fowler's plough engines driving two 12-inch centrifugal pumps and one 8-inch pump.
4833. How many gallons does that raise per hour? Roughly speaking, about 400,000 gallons per hour.
4834. To what height has the water to be lifted? It varies from 20 to 25 feet, according to the season.
4835. With that supply of water you can irrigate the whole of your cultivation? Yes; but not quite as often as we would like to do it.
4836. What are the wages of white labourers in this district, outside of farming work? Eight shillings a day and they find themselves.
4837. What is the cost of getting your produce to Townsville? About 13s. a ton from the mill to Townsville.
4838. Supposing that the Polynesian Act remains in force as at present, by which no more Polynesians can be imported after 1890, what will be the effect on this plantation? I think it would close it up.
4839. *By Mr. Cooley:* You only made 140 tons of sugar last year—what was the cause of that poor crop? It was a bad season; but the real cause was that we had a very heavy crop to take off in 1887, and we could not get the labour to take the crop off and cultivate for next season. We were in much trouble financially that we were obliged to get every ton of sugar we could. We were obliged to keep going all the time.
4840. If you had had a full supply of labour to carry on the field work, would you have had a bigger crop last season? Yes; a fairly good crop—three or four times as much as we had.
4841. Do you and your brother manage the estate? Yes.
4842. You are the owners of it? Not now. We were once.
4843. The total amount of wages paid to Europeans does not include management? Yes; it includes everything.
4844. What has been your death rate of kanakas during the last two years? We lost one kanaka.
4845. Does the amount paid for the annual overhaul include the amount paid to all the fitters and labourers, or is it for material only? I was not counting material. I was counting slight wear and tear, but nothing new is included.
4846. You have occasionally to replace? I spent far more in new things.
4847. Including everything, what would the cost be? The overhaul would cost us nearer £100 a year, including alterations, wear and tear, and renewing.
4848. What is your water supply for irrigating purposes? We draw altogether out of Lilymere Lagoon.
4849. Is it an unfailing supply? As far as we can find out.
4850. Have you any other pumps at work? Yes; we are now working the mill pumps. There is a 7-inch and a 5-inch Tangye's special. We do not count these as part of the irrigation scheme, but still we have had to use them this year.
4851. What number of gallons do these pumps throw per hour? I should think we get about another 30,000 gallons an hour out of those two pumps.
4852. It costs 13s. a ton to land your sugar in Townsville—does that include transit over your own tramway? Yes; we reckon that.
4853. That includes the actual cost of transporting it over your own line? Yes.

4854. How

- C. Young- 4854. How many miles of line have you to transport to water carriage? About seven miles.
 4855. Will that 13s. include interest on the outlay for the tramway? Only the working expenses of carrying the sugar down. There is no allowance for anything except the labour of taking it down.
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 4857. Do you lease your land to any small growers? We have tried to, but never succeeded in getting anyone to take it.
 4858. Would you do so if you could? Yes; we would be very glad to lease the lot of it.
 4859. What price per acre would you charge? I never worked that out. We never could get even an offer for it. I should think £1 an acre—not less.
 4860. Does that include land which is ready for the plough? Yes.
 4861. You do not mean forest land that has to be stumped? No; land ready for the plough.
 4862. Ifave you double crushing? No.
 4863. Is your machinery of the best description? Yes.
 4864. Have you vacuum pans? Yes; and triple efféts.
 4865. Have you press filters and every appliance for saving sugar and labour? Yes; it is a very good mill, I think.
 4866. Do you weigh your cane? No.
 4867. Do you measure the number of gallons of juice? Yes.
 4868. How many gallons does it take to make a ton of sugar? This year it was something over 1,500. It generally takes between 1,600 and 1,700.
 4869. Do you make the best white sugar? Yes.
 4870. What are you paying for islander's passage money? About £23, not including capitation fee.
 4871. Have you obtained any lately? Yes, we have.
 4872. Was that the cost? It was somewhere thereabouts.
 4873. Do you get as many as you require? No, we have great difficulty in getting them.
 4874. Would you extend operations if you could get more? I do not know really; it is hardly in my power to say.
 4875. Can you suggest any means by which islanders can be more easily obtained? I have often thought that if the Government would take up the labour question in a sort of patronising manner instead of showing the antagonistic feeling that there has been; establish a depôt on the islands, have a medical man to inspect the boys, and run steamers backwards and forwards to Queensland, there would be no difficulty in getting any amount of labour. Once the boys found that they were carried backwards and forwards quickly they possibly might tell others.
 4876. If the rate of passage money was reduced considerably would you take more labour—is that a drawback, the high cost of introduction? Yes; we would have more kanakas if we could get them at a lower price.
 4877. Do you manure your land? We have tried one or two experiments, but we have not manured to any extent.
 4878. Do you trash your cane? Sometimes. We cannot as a rule get the labour. Lately we have burnt the cane.
 4879. Is that not a very dangerous process? It is very dangerous.
 4880. Have you ever had any serious loss through burning? We have had some very nasty fires occasionally, and lost through not being able to get the cane off quickly.
 4881. If you had labour to trash that would be avoided? Yes. Once in 1887 it took us eleven days to get the burning from the one fire off.
 4882. What variety of cane do you find suits the district best? Rose bamboe.
 4883. *By the Chairman:* Can you state the causes which in your opinion have depressed the sugar industry? Mainly the uncertainty of procuring any reliable labour for field work, and when it is procured the high price of it. Then of course there is the low price of sugar. Those are the two main causes.
 4884. Can you offer any suggestions by which the industry can be relieved in any way? If we could get reciprocity with some of the other colonies, and if the Government would take the labour question in hand it would give relief. That would be an enormous help.
 4885. How long have you been without the ordinary rains in the district? In 1887 we had 51·81 inches on seventy-nine days, and in 1888 we had 23·64 inches on thirty-eight days.
 4886. Up to the present time what has the rainfall been? We had 2·45 inches in January, and 0·29 this morning.
 4887. How does that compare with previous rainfalls? In 1882, the first year we came here we had 68·83 inches.
 4888. Was that one of the highest falls? That was about the highest.
 4889. When did you commence the irrigation works? We began the irrigation scheme in August, 1885.
 4890. And you have continued it ever since? Yes.
 4891. *By Mr. Conley:* When you had the big crops in 1887 you had no labour to take it off? Exactly. I think I have rather overstated the cost of irrigation. It only costs about 7s. 6d. an acre.
 4892. For looding? Yes.
 4893. That includes the formation of all the channels? No; that is the cost of putting the water on. The channels were made years ago.
 4894. In fact that includes working expenses in full. Does it include wear and tear? No wear and tear. That is what it costs for labour and firewood.
 4895. What is the capacity of your mill? It will make about 1,500 tons.
 4896. What is the most you have ever made? Between 1,300 and 1,400 tons.
 4897. *By the Chairman:* Did you and your brother originally purchase this plantation? We bought some land and selected some more. There was nothing here when we came.
 4898. Then the whole of the capital of yourself and brother is invested in this estate? Yes; it is.
 4899. And you have had to obtain pecuniary assistance as well? Yes.
 4900. You are getting no return whatever from the estate for your own capital invested? None.

4901. Nor yet from the borrowed capital? None. We are getting deeper into the mire as we go along.
 4902. Unless some means are adopted to relieve the present depressed state of the industry there is a probability of its total collapse, so far as you are concerned? I think we must go before very long.

C. Young.
 6 Feb., 1889.

JOHN YOUNG examined:

4903. *By the Chairman*: How long have you been connected with the cultivation of the sugar cane? About seven years.

J. Young.

4904. You are one of the managers and part proprietor of this estate? Field manager.

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4905. Can you state, from your own experience, what, in your opinion, are the causes which have depressed the sugar industry? Scarcity of cheap and reliable labour and the low price of sugar, and in this district, no doubt, the dry seasons.

4906. Can you offer us any suggestions by which the industry can be relieved from its depression? I think that something could be done in the way of assisting us in getting labour by establishing depôts on the islands, having a doctor there and a Government agent, and fast boats to bring the labourers to the northern coast. In this district I think the Government might do something for us in the way of irrigation.

4907. You have already experimented with irrigation on the plantation? Yes; we have had considerable experience since 1885.

4908. In what way could the Government assist you in irrigation? I think they would assist the district, probably, more than the planters individually. The whole of the district is suited for irrigation, and the Burdekin waters could be brought down here by gravitation.

4909. That would be from the falls of the Burdekin? Yes, from what we call the "rocks," about ten or twelve miles from here. Pumped from there the water would fill up all our lagoons, and by a regular system, such as the Chaffey Bros. have, it could be taken all the way down to the good land.

4910. Would the selectors on the other side of the Pioneer Plantation be benefited by the irrigation scheme you have just mentioned? Certainly.

4911. They would come in the direct track of the waters? Yes. Such a lagoon as at Maryvale and all the lagoons could be replenished from the Burdekin River.

4912. None of these lagoons have shown any signs of failure? None have shown any signs of failing. I can give you an account of this one of our own. We have been pumping since last March with only a break of a fortnight and we have only lowered it 4 feet. We have used two 12-inch pumps, a 5-inch, and a 7-inch.

4913. *By Mr. Cooley*: But there would be a limit if all other owners were pumping away at the same rate? Of course there would be a limit, as there would be to the Burdekin River waters. In the event of "Airdmillan" starting and putting on two or three 20-inch pumps on the other side the lagoon might collapse.

4914. *By the Chairman*: If the Government were to construct the irrigation works you speak of, so as to tap the Burdekin waters, is there a sufficient area of land under cultivation to bear a tax sufficient to cover the interest on the cost of construction? That I would not say; but I think I may say there is sufficient good land to make it pay. Of course if it were known that water could be had for irrigation for a certainty, the whole of the good land would be put under cultivation. The dry seasons prevent people from putting much of their land under cultivation.

4915. *By Mr. King*: Have you any idea of what area of land in the delta of the Burdekin could be put under cultivation? I should say, roughly speaking, about 40,000 acres—that is good land.

4916. *By Mr. Cooley*: Now that you have had experience of irrigation, do you think you could overcome the drought if you had sufficient suitable labour? I do. I have every confidence.

4917. Do you think you could grow sugar to pay at the present prices? Yes, with sufficient cheap reliable labour and a plentiful supply of water. To prove that to you, I may say that it is our intention now to apply for more pumping power to put the whole of the land we have under cultivation under irrigation. That is going to be done at once.

4918. What additional area will you cultivate with this additional pumping power? We shall put under cultivation about 200 acres more. We shall then have 800 acres.

4919. *By the Chairman*: Have you grown any other tropical productions besides sugar on the plantation? No, nothing.

4920. You have an orchard of mangoes? Yes; we lease the orchard.

4921. How many trees have you? About 100.

4922. They grow very well with you? Very well indeed without irrigation. The fruit would be very much finer if the trees were irrigated.

4923. Can you dispose of the fruit? We do dispose of it, but at a very low price indeed.

4924. What do you get for your crop? We got £30 last year.

4925. Then you sell the fruit on the trees? Yes; and the buyer has to pick it, pack it in cases, and remove it. We also have oranges and limes.

4926. *By Mr. Cooley*: Does the buyer make anything at that price? I do not think so.

4927. From what cause? From want of market. All the fruit he takes away he has to send by steamer, and frequently the steamer is two or three days behind time and the mangoes rot on the wharf. If we could get the railway anywhere near, such an orchard as that would pay very well indeed.

4928. *By the Chairman*: It would benefit the people of Townsville as well as yourselves? Yes; the mangoes simply rot as it is. Tons and tons are wasted every year. Last year I suppose I had eighty or ninety cases of lemons and I could not sell one in the district. People would not offer to buy them on account of the bad communication with Townsville.

4929. *By Mr. King*: Have you not tried any means of preserving fruit? No; we have never tried that yet. I believe it has been started at Port Douglas.

4930. *By the Chairman*: If railway communication were established between Bowen and Townsville a larger area would be placed under fruit in this district? I should think so; a very much larger area. Every farmer with his two hundred or three hundred acres would plant a certain number of fruit trees.

4931. *By*

- J. Young.
6 Feb., 1889.
4931. *By Mr. King*: Could you tell us how many small selectors there are on the Burdekin delta? I could hardly tell you that.
4932. *By the Chairman*: The whole of your capital is invested in this plantation? Yes.
4933. And at present you are receiving no interest on your outlay? No; I look upon it as gone altogether—capital and all.
4934. If times were to improve, would there be a prospect of recovery? Yes; I think so.
4935. If some measures were adopted by the country to assist the sugar industry in its present depression you might possibly recover your former position? Yes.
4936. Supposing, on the other hand, that the importation of Polynesian labour ceases at the end of 1890, what then would be your prospects? Well, I suppose, we should have to work this place with European labour. There would be nothing else for it, and I should most certainly resign my position here at once. I should not think it worth while going on, I am so confident that it would be utterly impossible to work this place solely with white labour.

(At Airdmillan.)

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL McMILLAN examined:

- A. C. McMillan.
6 Feb., 1889.
4937. *By the Chairman*: You were manager of the Airdmillan Estate? Yes; local director and manager of the Airdmillan Estate, but I now have nothing to do with it.
4938. What is the total area of the estate? 15,000 acres.
4939. How much of it was under cultivation? 1,500 acres.
4940. What is the approximate amount of capital invested in the estate? £200,000 approximately.
4941. Has it ever returned any interest on the capital invested? No; not at any time.
4942. When the mill was working what were the average working expenses of the estate per annum? £14,000.
4943. What labour was employed in working the plantation? A variety of labour. We tried to supplement the labour by the introduction of Maltese, but we had principally kanaka labour. The Maltese were an utter failure.
4944. What number of Europeans were generally employed on the estate? From 70 to 90.
4945. They comprised all classes of labour? All classes of labour—ploughmen, mechanics, and skilled artisans. In addition to those there were always 300 or 400 coloured labourers.
4946. In your experience of working the plantation with the various classes of labour which you have employed, which do you consider the most suitable for the work of the cane field? South Sea Islanders, certainly.
4947. Did you ever employ Europeans in field work? Yes; we have done so, and they were an utter failure.
4948. The mill is now closed and the whole of the land thrown out of cultivation? Yes.
4949. Can you give us the causes of that? The causes were that the English shareholders being satisfied that the legislature of the country was against the industry, would go no further into it. They threw it up entirely, and shut up the estate. That was about the time that the New Guinea Islanders were removed from us, and that collapsed the English shareholders.
4950. How long has the mill been closed? Since the beginning of 1886.
4951. You have resided in the district ever since? Yes.
4952. You are aware that at the present time the sugar industry is very much depressed? I am.
4953. Can you tell us what in your opinion are the causes of that depression? In the first instance the depression was due to the great fall in the price of sugar, while at the same time it was considerably assisted by the difficulty in procuring labour; but the continued depression is in my opinion unquestionably due to the expressed intention of the legislature of the colony to abolish kanaka labour.
4954. Can you offer any suggestions by which the industry may be relieved from the depression? Yes, to provide a substitute for the light labour which is available for extra spring and harvest work in all communities where agriculture is successful, for which the South Sea Islander is best suited in this district, and which is performed by women and children all over Europe.
4955. From your experience can you offer any suggestions for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing? Yes, to extend the operations of the Department of the Under Secretary for Agriculture, and give access by railroad to centres of population as a rapid means of marketing perishable produce.
4956. You are aware that the importation of Polynesian labour ceases on the 31st December, 1890. What do you think will be the probable effect of that upon the sugar industry? It will shut it up so far as North Queensland is concerned.
4957. Supposing the legislature were to re-consider its decision and were to endeavour to do something to assist the industry, do you think there would be any probability of Airdmillan re-opening? I think so.
4958. Can you state from your own personal knowledge that the closing of the mill has been a great loss to the district? Certainly, a very great loss to the district.
4959. There was a large amount of capital invested here in steam ploughs and other mechanical appliances? Yes. Everything that could aid the cultivation of cane. We merely wanted the coloured labour for field work. My experience is that with one-fourth of white labour and three-fourths of coloured labour the industry can be made a great success. This district is admirably suited for cultivation.
4960. *By Mr. King*: Can you tell us what the cost of the machinery was as it stands in the mill, erected? About £90,000.
4961. Have you any tramway? Yes we have a complete system of tramways. Four miles of permanent line between the mill and the wharf and 2½ miles of portable line to be used in the fields as required.
4962. How did you work it? The main line by locomotives and the portable line by horses.
4963. *By Mr. Cowley*: Were these 15,000 acres purchased by the company from small holders or were they selected? It was all purchased land.
4964. *By Mr. King*: At what price? Well, I secured the land myself first of all, and put it into a company as my share. They took my cattle and horses and everything I possessed. I put the whole of my earnings for twenty-five years into the concern.

4965. What

4965. What price did you give to the small holders from whom you purchased? About £3 an acre on an average—a price that I do not think could be got now.

4966. *By the Chairman*: How long have you been in the colony? I have been in the colony since 1862, and in the north of Queensland all the time.

4967. Then the whole of your earnings for the whole of that period were invested in this estate? Yes; I was for sixteen years a Government officer, and the whole of my savings were put in.

4968. Practically everything is now lost? Everything is lost. I am waiting now for a release before I can do anything. I could get professional employment if I could only get my release. There is some complication between the mortgagees and the original shareholders.

4969. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did you make any effort to lease this land? Yes; we made every effort to carry on as a central factory and lease the land in blocks admirably suited for cultivation. Water could be had by the sinking on each individual block.

4970. You failed to obtain any response? Yes; we failed to obtain any response whatever.

4971. *By the Chairman*: From your long experience of the northern districts, can you give us your opinion, generally, of the state of agriculture outside of sugar growing? Well, I think it is languishing partly through the difficulty of getting perishable goods to market. Fruit can be grown well here if it could only be taken quickly to market; but the means of communication by steamer does not suit. Even the butter from this district cannot be taken to market in an eatable condition. That is a great fault up North. Nearly everything is perishable and cannot be got to market in a fit state. That is really what is keeping back this district. If it had communication with Charters Towers, Townsville, and Ravenswood, it would go ahead apart from sugar altogether.

4972. Then until that is remedied you do not think there will be any permanent settlement? Not by small settlers. If they produce butter or pigs there is a good market, but they cannot get them away. The people are sickened by the failures they encounter. I have been all over North Queensland and know numbers of settlers, and I hear the same old story from all of them.

(At the Township of Ayr.)

JOHN TRAHERNE WILLIAMS examined:

4973. *By the Chairman*: You are a duly qualified medical practitioner? Yes.

4974. You are medical officer of the district? Surgeon and medical officer.

4975. You visit the various plantations to look after the Polynesians? I do.

4976. How do the Polynesians stand generally so far as health is concerned? Ever since I have been here, and I came here a year ago, the only plantation that has shown signs of bad health is Pioneer, and I consider that is due to the bad health of the island. The Santa Cruz islanders are the only ones I have had bother with.

4977. What have they suffered from? Acute lung disease.

4978. During the year that you have been here what has been the mortality? From Pioneer I have lost about twenty-three; Seaforth, six; and Kalamia, one.

4979. Were they young boys? Mostly young—between eighteen and twenty-seven years.

4980. You consider that they are well treated at the plantations? Yes; well looked after.

4981. Supplied with as much food as is necessary? Certainly, from what I have seen.

4982. In the event of any of them being taken ill on the plantations, is hospital accommodation provided for them? Yes.

4983. Suitable, in your opinion, for their circumstances? Yes.

4984. *By Mr. King*: Do you ascertain what islands the particular boys come from, so as to be able to say whether certain islanders are weaker than others? Yes; Santa Cruz island is one that we ought never to have any boys from at all to work on the plantations. I have corresponded with another doctor on the subject, and have made an official report concerning the matter. Tanna boys are the best lot you can get, and Solomon Islanders are fairly good too.

4985. *By the Chairman*: You are of opinion that there is nothing in the treatment of the islanders at Pioneer which has in any way contributed to the mortality? I have never found anything yet.

4986. How often do you visit the plantations? Twice a week, except in urgent cases, and I then go either night or day.

4987. Do you dispense the medicine for the islanders yourself? No; I generally have a wardman. I see that he makes the medicine up properly. It would be hardly possible for me to dispense all the medicine myself.

4988. *By Mr. Cowley*: Where were the Santa Cruz boys passed? In Townsville. I was here when they first came up and examined a lot of them, and nearly every one I examined had lung disease.

4989. *By the Chairman*: If you had been medical officer at Townsville you would not have passed them? Well, I saw them at the Pioneer. I could not say whether they had lung disease at Townsville or not, but directly I examined them I found they had got it.

4990. How long was it after their arrival that you examined them? They left in January by the "Roderick Dhu." I passed an examination on them when I was travelling, and then I found six of them with lung disease. I was not then medical officer.

4991. *By Mr. King*: How long after their landing was that? I saw them directly after they came here.

4992. From their appearance would you have judged that they had lung disease? I should consider that they were very weak and not fit for much work.

4993. You examined them with the stethoscope? Yes; in Santa Cruz Island the lung disease is very rapid. There may not be any sign of it to-day, but to-morrow it may show itself, and the boy goes off in about six days. It is a very rapid consumption, both lungs going together.

4994. *By Mr. Cowley*: Might not the boys have contracted the disease on the road up from Townsville? It might be possible.

4995. *By the Chairman*: What is the general condition of the European population here? Since I have been here six people have died. I have been called to them, but have not always attended them. They have died before I arrived.

4996. *By Mr. Cowley*: Were any of these death from accident? None of them through accident.

4997. *By*

A. C.
McMillan
6 Feb., 1889.

J. T.
Williams.
6 Feb., 1889.

J. T.
Williams,
6 Feb., 1889.

4997. *By Mr. King*: Were they all adults? No; three infants, and a girl of eighteen died from burns.
 4998. *By Mr. Couley*: That was an accident? Yes; but I was not called in to that. I happened to be in the house at the time. A young man of about twenty-five died from dysentery, and an old man of about seventy-three died from apoplexy. Mr. Townsend of Inkermann Station also died in the district.
 4999. Did any of the three infants die from causes that you would attribute to the climate? They died from convulsions through teething.
 5000. *By the Chairman*: Speaking from your twelve months' experience, would you say that the climate was comparatively healthy for Europeans? I should say it was certainly healthy.
 5001. *By Mr. King*: Is there no fever? I have had no cases of fever, except one man who came down from Croydon with it.

WEDNESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY, 1889.

EVENING SITTING.

BURDEKIN (TOWNSVILLE) DISTRICT.

(At the Pioneer Plantation.)

Present:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.
 A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

JAMES MacKENZIE examined:

- J. MacKenzie. 5002. *By the Chairman*: How long have you been connected with the cultivation of sugar cane? For the last twenty years.
 5003. How many years in Queensland? The whole time in Queensland. I was for three years in the Government Service during that time, but was connected with sugar growing, and was one year in Fiji.
 5004. You established the estate of "Seaforth"? I did.
 5005. Is it your property now? I am not the owner of it now. I am the manager of it.
 5006. What is the total area of the estate? About 2,500 acres.
 5007. How much of it is under cultivation? 800 acres.
 5008. With cane? It has been all cultivated with cane, but there are only 570 acres at present under cane.
 5009. How many acres of cane were crushed last season? 250.
 5010. How much sugar was made? 250 tons.
 5011. How much molasses? I cannot yet tell; there is a quantity still in the coolers.
 5012. What do you do with it? Throw it away.
 5013. What amount of capital has been invested in the estate? From £85,000 to £90,000.
 5014. Has it ever returned interest on the outlay? Never.
 5015. What were your working expenses last year? Over £10,200.
 5016. Did the estate pay working expenses? It did not.
 5017. Have you ever had any return from your own capital invested in the estate? No return whatever.
 5018. Neither interest or principal? Neither interest or principal.
 5019. Then, practically, all the capital you invested in the estate is gone? Gone.
 5020. What labour is employed in working the plantation? 168 kanakas, 6 Malays, 2 Chinamen, and about 30 white men.
 5021. What is the average rate of wages paid to each class? I can give the average cost of the kanakas. Their wages and passage money I add together. A kanaka costs about £26 per annum, taking last year's operations as a guide; a Malay about £30; a Chinaman about £55; and a white man about £75, on an average.
 5022. What description of labour do you consider best adapted for field work on the plantation? Kanakas, indisputably.
 5023. Have you ever employed European labour at field work? I have tried them at cane-cutting and they failed; they could not do it.
 5024. Did you ever try them at hoeing or trashing? Never.
 5025. Do you think they are suitable for that kind of work? Utterly unsuitable. They would not do it; they deem it beneath them.
 5026. Has that always been your experience? It has been my experience at Mackay as well as here. There are exceptional instances when a man is really short of money—when he is begging for work and desirous of getting it—he will try it for a time, but I have never had a European who would stick to it. One man tried it for a day and kept up at cane-cutting with the kanakas (the only man I have ever known who did), and the next day disappeared. One season I had an Italian who stuck to it the whole season, and that is the only instance I have known. I have never had a European at weeding and trashing. I refer particularly to cane-cutting.
 5027. What agricultural implements do you use generally? Horse-hoes and ploughs of various kinds.
 5028. Is that labour done by Europeans? The ploughing partly by Europeans and partly by kanakas, and the horse-hoe work entirely by kanakas.
 5029. *By Mr. King*: Do you use the steam plough? No; I do not.
 5030. *By the Chairman*: How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each black labourer employed? About four.
 5031. Do the islanders employed in field work suffer in health? They do not unless I get some from an unhealthy island. I got some very unhealthy ones.

5032. What

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5032. What was the name of the island? They were from New Guinea and New Ireland.
5033. Does the outside plantation work affect the health of Europeans? In no way at all. They keep in really good health, understanding at the same time that Europeans are only employed at ploughing.
5034. Has your cane ever suffered from the grub or from disease of any kind? Not to any remarkable extent.
5035. Since the dry seasons have set in on the Burdekin you have initiated a system of irrigation? I have.
5036. What steam power do you use? Three engines and three different pumps at different stations. I do not know the exact horse-power of each.
5037. What water do they throw up on an average per day? I am sorry to say that only one pump has had a full supply.
5038. Have you any idea of what it costs per acre to flood the land each time? The lowest price I have done it at has been 2s., and at times considerably above that owing to the deficiency of water. From 2s. to 10s. per acre.
5039. Then you are not so advantageously situated for irrigation as some of the other plantations? I am not.
5040. So far as your experience has gone, has irrigation proved a success? A thorough success. I would have no crop whatever this year had it not been for irrigation.
5041. You believe it would prove amply remunerative to any one undertaking it? Certainly.
5042. Have you any idea of what the yield of cane was two years ago on your plantation—do you weigh the cane? I do; but I did not two years ago.
5043. What was it the previous year? It ran from 12 to 15 tons per acre.
5044. What was it last year? I could not say exactly, because I could not weigh it.
5045. Do you think it was less or more? Somewhere about the same.
5046. Does it pay on that average? It does pay.
5047. What is the cost of the machinery in your mill? About £22,000 erected.
5048. What is the average cost of the annual overhaul? I should say £300 to £350.
5049. You are aware that the importation of South Sea Island labour ceases in December, 1890—what will be the effect of that on the plantations? Operations would be discontinued as there would no longer be a possibility of their being remunerative.
5050. You do not grow any other tropical production besides sugar cane? I do not.
5051. What number of horses have you on the plantation? About 60.
5052. Where do you get the feed for them? It is purchased in the district or from Townsville.
5053. Do you purchase from the selectors in the district? Yes.
5054. Then the plantation is a source of remuneration and profit to the selectors? Yes; it provides them with a local market for all they can grow in fact, because they cannot supply me fully. I have to buy from Townsville every season.
- 5054A. What wages are paid to Divisional Board labourers in this district? Either 6s. or 7s. a day.
5055. Are contractors with the Board allowed to employ coloured labour on the contracts? We have had no contracts.
5056. Is it all day work? It is.
5057. Are coloured labourers employed at day work? No coloured labour of any kind is employed.
5058. What is the contribution of your plantation to the Divisional Board? £6 a year.
5059. That is all the plantation was assessed at? Yes, last year.
5060. What were your working expenses for 1887? A little over £15,000, and the returns about 1,760 tons of sugar.
5061. To what cause do you attribute the low crop of last year? To the deficient rainfall.
5062. What was the rainfall for 1887? The rain that produced the crop was about seventy-five inches.
5063. How did that compare with 1888? We had twenty-five inches only last year. There was a deficiency of fifty inches. The average annual rainfall for the last eight years has been about fifty inches.
5064. By Mr. Cowley: You say your annual cost of kanakas is £20—does that include rations and all charges? Those figures are only wages. I could give you the cost of rations. The total wages of the estate for 1888 were £5,800; the cost of rations for everyone, £2,200.
5065. Had you enough labour to take off the crop of 1887, and cultivate the crop for 1888? No, I could not irrigate, and hence the heavy loss. All my labour was employed in taking off the crop and trying to make a return. I began irrigating in December.
5066. If you had had labour to irrigate and cultivate, do you think you would have had a much better crop? A much better crop.
5067. Do you manure your land at all? I throw out the filter press manure.
5068. Do you purchase cane from small growers? I have done so.
5069. Are you still doing so? There is none to purchase.
5070. What price did you give? 8s. per ton delivered.
5071. Have you leased any land to farmers? I have not.
5072. Are you prepared to do so if they will grow cane? The proprietors would be prepared if a sufficient quantity could be grown, but I know of no sufficient number of reliable men to do it.
5073. By the Chairman: What, in your opinion, are the causes of the present depressed state of the sugar industry? Fall in the price of sugar and rise in the rates of all wages in the district. When I first started sugar growing in 1880, I engaged new chums at £30 for twelve months, and some of them saw the agreement through. Now, if I was to engage a ploughman in Townsville, I should have to give him £45, and he will not engage for a longer period than three months. At the end of that time he asks the ruling wages in the district, namely, £1 a week. In that time the wages have risen from £30 a year to £52, or nearly double, and the expense of kanakas has risen almost in exactly the same proportion. Sugar has decreased in value, and at the same time there is the uncertainty of getting labour and the popular feeling against it, and these together have caused the depression. The value of sugar in 1879 was £30 a ton against £12 in 1887—a fall of more than a half—and labour has risen more than one-half. Therefore, the profit is almost entirely swallowed up. Now the previous year, in a good season, I made a profit; in an average year it is almost impossible to make a profit.

- J. MacKenzie. 5074. Can you offer the Commission any suggestions by which the present state of affairs can be improved?
 6 Feb., 1889. If coloured labour could be obtained at lower rates, and in sufficient quantity, and the importation taken into the hands of the Government, and if the Government would assist in supplying water for irrigation works, I believe we would be greatly benefited. Further, if we could obtain reciprocity with Victoria and the surrounding colonies, then we would have something to work upon, but at present the struggle with other countries is too keen. I would prefer that the Government entirely took the importation of kanakas and natives of New Guinea into their own hands.
5075. Is the present mode of sending your sugar to market satisfactory. As far as "Seaforth" is concerned. As I am close to the seacoast I have not much to complain of. I have heard of a railway going through the district, but I do not know that it would be much good to "Seaforth" Estate. It would do very great good to the district. If a railway passed through the district, then much land which is at present unoccupied would be cultivated. The expense of carriage through this country if the soil is at all wet would be very heavy through land which is some distance from the port, but "Seaforth" having steamers coming alongside its own land the expenses are not great in that respect.
5076. After your long labours in the northern district in the attempt to grow sugar you are practically ruined? Practically and absolutely ruined. All my years of labour and expense have gone for nothing.
5077. Then those who are the nominal owners of the plantation are not receiving any interest on their outlay? Not a penny of interest—in fact, worse, they have to make good loss from wages paid to employes this year.
5078. Are you in a position to say that unless something is done in the direction of giving assistance to the industry the present state of affairs will continue? As adviser of home capitalists I could no longer advise them to continue such an industry. I have been entrusted with large sums of money from them, and I could not advise them to continue in an industry which is condemned in the way that this is.
5079. Can you offer any suggestions for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing? I may mention that all other tropical productions partake too much of the nature of luxuries, whereas sugar is a necessity, being used largely all over the world, and being a compulsory article of diet. Therefore, a glut in the market would in all probability occur if any other product was substituted for sugar. Then, again, any other product to be grown profitably would require the same labour as sugar requires. If labour is obtainable, sugar is a safer article of produce than anything else.
5080. Would it pay the selector to grow cane unless he was satisfied that there was a mill within reasonable distance to take it from him? I referred to any product other than sugar cane, such as coffee.
5081. I understand you to say that you would not recommend anyone to go in for anything but the production of cane for fear of there being a glut in the market? Yes; if for instance potatoes, or oats, or pineapples, for preserving were grown, they would be growing in other parts, and I believe there would be a glut in the market, because those things partake of the character of luxuries, whereas sugar is a necessity of life.
5082. Is the district well suitable for the growth of oranges, limes, and mangoes? It is, but what with the devastations of flying foxes and grubs in Queensland, I would not advise anyone to go in for them. I do not see the use that they could be put to on such a gigantic scale. I mean that if the sugar industry were crushed out of Queensland no other industry could take its place. A few isolated places would grow oranges, but if the whole of the sugar lands of Queensland were put under some other crops than sugar I am sure it would not answer. I admit that many other things could be grown on a small scale, but the whole of the available lands on the Burdekin, Johnstone, and Herbert could not be devoted to other productions because there would be a glut and the industry would come to grief.
5083. By Mr. Cowley: Do you think this climate and soil are as favourable to the growth of sugar cane as the Fiji climate and soil? There are some parts of Queensland just as well suited for the growth of sugar cane as Fiji. The Johnstone River is almost identical with Fiji.
5084. Do you think that the plantations are conducted on a more economical scale than formerly, and that there is more sugar extracted from the juice than previously? Yes; everything is more carefully looked after.
5085. There are more labour-saving appliances? Yes; and less men employed in the factory.
5086. Have you a tramway? Yes; and it is used almost entirely during the season for conveying the cane to the mill and the sugar to the wharf. One horse does the whole carting to the wharf.
5087. That all tends to the economical working of the plantation? Yes.
5088. How many miles of tramline have you? About four and a-half miles, counting permanent and portable tramway, and about 120 trucks. I suggest that the Government take the matter of the introduction of kanakas or natives of New Guinea into their own hands, and not restrict their use, with the sole proviso that a certain proportion, afterwards to be determined, of the population of sugar estates shall be of European extraction—say, one in five or one in six. At present my staff of agricultural labourers numbers 180. I use on an average thirty white men, or one to every six kanakas. I would be prepared to advocate that. I think also that there should be no rules or regulations except that an inspector should go round and count the heads of the Europeans on the plantations to see that the proportion is maintained. If the sugar planters employ sixty kanakas they will employ at least ten whites: if we are allowed no kanakas the certainty is that we will employ no whites.

JOHN DRYSDALE examined:

- J. Drysdale. 5089. By the Chairman: You are a member of the firm of Drysdale Brothers? No; I am merely manager for them at present. I am not a member of the firm.
- 6 Feb., 1889. 5090. You are manager of the Pioneer plantation? Yes; with my brother.
5091. Owned by whom? It is owned principally by the Drysdale Brothers. Four of my brothers are in it and one or two others. It is a sort of private company.
5092. How long have you been engaged in the cultivation of sugar cane? Two years.
5093. What is the total area of the estate? 5,800 acres.
5094. How many acres have you under cultivation by cane? 1,270 acres.
5095. What quantity of cane was crushed last season? 800 acres.
5096. How much sugar did you make? 650 tons.
5097. How much molasses? I do not know. We do not measure it.

5098. What

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5098. What do you do with the molasses? Run it away down a drain.
5099. What was your yield of sugar in 1887? We made 2,550 tons.
5100. How do you account for the difference between the years 1887 and 1888? The year 1887 was a very good season for growing cane. There was plenty of rain all through the year. The cane grew through the winter; but last year there was very little rain.
5101. You put the deficiency down to the drought? Yes, entirely.
5102. Can you tell us what amount of capital is invested in the estate? The capital account stands at £96,000. There is a profit and loss account with £12,000 to the bad, and there is also loss of interest on £50,000 for six years.
5103. Practically the estate does not return interest on the outlay? No; we have made no interest, and have lost £12,000.
5104. What were the working expenses for 1888? £16,145.
5105. What labour do you employ in working the plantation? The average for the year is 40 Europeans, 8 Chinese, 7 Cingalese, and 244 kanakas.
5106. What average rate of wages do you pay these different classes? The kanakas average £6 17s. 4d., Chinese, £46 16s., and Cingalese, £39 per annum. The Europeans range from 20s. to 30s. per week. The field manager gets about £30 a month, and the engineers about 7s. a day with rations and quarters.
5107. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do any of them get double rations? Yes; the married men get double rations.
5108. *By the Chairman*: Speaking from your own experience, what do you consider the most suitable labour for field work, such as hoeing and trashing? Kanaka labour is undoubtedly the best.
5109. Have you ever employed Europeans at that work? No; I have not tried them.
5110. Is there any reason why you have not offered Europeans that work on this plantation? We have generally had sufficient kanakas to do it. On one occasion we had not sufficient and we had to employ a large number of whites, but they were entirely employed in carting cane. We never attempted to put them at trashing or hoeing. We had as many as sixty white men in 1887.
5111. Is it work that you would be inclined to offer to Europeans? We could not afford to pay the wages.
5112. At the present price of sugar? Yes.
5113. If sugar were to increase in value would there be any probability of your doing so? It would have to increase very much.
5114. In consequence of the drought you have initiated a system of irrigation on the plantation? Yes.
5115. Will you kindly state the system that you have initiated? The plantation is intersected by lagoons, and from these lagoons we pump the water, by means of a centrifugal pump, up to the banks, run it in carriers, and distribute it about the different blocks of cane.
5116. *By Mr. King*: How much land do you irrigate? We have about 1,000 acres that we can irrigate.
5117. How much water do your pumps raise per day? Our main pumping station raises 4,000,000 gallons per day of twenty-four hours.
5118. How many acres is that sufficient to irrigate? That will irrigate from sixteen to twenty acres.
5119. To what height have you to lift the water? Twenty-five feet.
5120. What do you reckon the cost of flooding per acre? Each flooding costs 5s. per acre; that is, not including interest on capital or wear and tear of machinery.
5121. How many engines have you got? We have one portable engine which works a 15-inch centrifugal pump, and there are two pumping stations where we use ploughing engines.
5122. *By Mr. Cowley*: Sixteen-horse power? Yes.
5123. *By Mr. King*: What pumps do you use? One is a 12-inch centrifugal pump, and the other two 7-inch pumps working together.
5124. Do you think that it pays to irrigate? Yes, certainly.
5125. *By the Chairman*: Was the crop of last year partially or wholly raised by irrigation? Partially only. If we had had more labour we could have done more irrigation and had a bigger crop, but we were short of labour, and having a very large crop of cane to get off the ground the year before we could not attend to the irrigating as we ought to have done.
5126. Will there be a larger area under irrigation this year than last year? Yes; we have extended our operations.
5127. You are erecting a large flume with a view of further extension? Yes; that will bring 150 acres more into the irrigation system.
5128. Have you any idea of what you have expended up to the present time on your irrigation works? No, I have made no calculation.
5129. Your irrigation gives employment to an increased number of hands? Certainly.
5130. Your experience at present is that it will pay the planter to irrigate his land if he has a sufficient supply of water? During the last two years our very existence has depended upon it. If it had not been for irrigation we would not have had any crop at all.
5131. Up to the present time there is every appearance that the irrigation will give you a crop for crushing this year? We expect to have a very fair crop indeed.
5132. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you made any estimate of what the crop will be? We think it will turn out 1,500 tons.
5133. Solely owing to irrigation? Entirely.
5134. *By Mr. King*: What is the value of your machinery in the mill? I cannot say. I have only been two years here.
5135. Can you not estimate the value of it? I should say about £30,000.
5136. You have a steam plough here? Yes.
5137. How many horses do you work on the plantation? One hundred.
5138. Where do you get the feed for them? We buy the maize from the selectors when they have got any. If they have not got any we buy it from Townsville.
5139. Do you buy anything besides maize from the selectors? Sweet potatoes occasionally for the Polynesians.
5140. Do you take any large quantity of them? No; we cannot get them.
5141. Has your land shown any signs of exhaustion? No sign yet.
5142. Do you manure it? No; except with refuse from the mill and the stables.

5143. Has

- J. Drysdale. 5143. Has your crop ever suffered from vermin or disease? Rats have done a considerable amount of damage.
- 6 Feb., 1889. 5144. *By Mr. Cowley*: What price do you pay the farmers for maize and sweet potatoes? From 4s. 6d. to 5s. for maize, and £4 a ton for sweet potatoes.
5145. Do you buy any cane from farmers? We bought some last year from Dr. Aherne. He is the only farmer who grew any.
5146. Is he still supplying you? No.
5147. What price did you pay him per ton? 9s. a ton delivered at the mill.
5148. Are you prepared to buy any amount at that price? Yes.
5149. Have you offered settlers that price or tried to induce them to grow for you? No, we have not. Several of them used to grow cane in the neighbourhood, but they have all given it up since the dry weather.
5150. *By the Chairman*: You are aware that the importation of kanakas into the colony ceases on the 31st December, 1890? Yes. I am aware of that.
5151. What do you think will be the probable effect, so far as your plantation is concerned, if that statute is enforced? I think it will be impossible to carry it on. It will be impossible to go on cultivating the sugar cane.
5152. You give that as your deliberate opinion? Yes, certainly; I do not see how it could possibly be carried on without kanakas or labour similar to kanakas.
5153. Do you generally have an overhaul of the machinery at the mill before you commence your new crushing? Yes, every year.
5154. What does that cost you? About £400.
5155. The whole of that is done by European labour? Nearly all.
5156. By skilled artisans and Europeans? Yes.
5157. Can you state what in your opinion are the causes which have led to the present depression in the sugar industry? Fall in the price of sugar is one cause, of course. Then the class of kanakas is not so good as it ought to be, nor can we get sufficient of them; the supply is too uncertain. The way in which they are recruited does not seem to be satisfactory. A great many boys are of very poor physique and under age; the consequence is that a great many of them die. Out of one lot of seventy-eight boys that we got last year, twenty-three were dead within ten months after they came. That, of course, is a very heavy loss to us. We lost their labour and we lost what we had to pay for them in the beginning. There is also a very heavy duty on rice, which falls heavily on the planters. There are too great facilities for kanakas getting intoxicating liquor by which we lose a great deal of their labour. Nearly every week we lose the work of ten or twelve men; that is every Monday there are ten or twelve men off work though the effects of having been drunk on Sunday. We find it impossible to stop that, and consequently lose a lot of labour which we ought to get out of them.
5158. Can you offer any suggestions from your practical knowledge as manager of the plantation by which the sugar industry can be improved? If a better price could be obtained for the sugar, and if we could get a better supply of labour more regularly, with boys of better physique, it would be improved. I do not know of anything else.
5159. How do you convey your sugar to market at present? We send it to the creek by bullock waggons and by steamer to Townsville.
5160. Are the arrangements satisfactory to you? No; the steamers are too uncertain. The arrivals and departures are entirely dependent upon the tides, and the tides are uncertain. It is not at all satisfactory. We only have communication once a fortnight.
5161. Would railway communication have any effect in improving the industry in this district? Certainly it would.
5162. You said you purchased your chief supply of fodder for the horses from the local farmers? Whenever they have it for sale we always buy it.
5163. Do you know that the knowledge that the plantations will require such fodder is an incentive to the farmers to grow it? I do not think they would grow much unless they were sure of selling it to the plantations.
5164. The stoppage of the plantations would be a great loss to the farmers? Yes; it would ruin most of them.
5165. Have you grown any other article of tropical agriculture besides sugar? Nothing but sweet potatoes, and we grow them for our own use.
5166. What sort of health do the islanders enjoy on the plantations? Upon the whole very good; with the exception of the ship load we got last year, who were a very weak lot.
5167. Do you think they brought the diseases they suffered from from the islands, or were they contracted here? I think that some of them brought the diseases with them; but most of them were contracted here. They were boys of such poor physique that they could not stand anything.
5168. Were they of the prescribed age? I believe some were considerably under the age; but you cannot tell.
5169. When you get boys of tender age do you put them to work with the robust boys or do they work in a gang by themselves? We put all the weak boys together and let them work with the women.
5170. What sort of health do the Europeans enjoy? Generally very good. They suffer a little from dysentery.
5171. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did your medical attendant look after the weak boys you speak of? Yes; and every care was taken of them. We have a hospital on the plantation.
- 5171A. What was the total cost of those islanders to you? We must have lost about £700.
5172. You think that could have been avoided if there had been proper supervision at the islands? Yes; certainly. They had no business to bring such boys away from the islands. They were not fit for anything.

LEWIS HOEY examined:

- L. Hoey. 5173. *By the Chairman*: You are field overseer at the Pioneer plantation? I am field manager.
- 6 Feb., 1889. 5174. How long have you been engaged in the cultivation of sugar cane? Nearly seventeen years.
5175. Have you had experience in any other country but Queensland? No; all my experience has been gained north of Rockhampton.
5176. What

5176. What is your experience with regard to the cultivation of sugar cane—do you think it can be grown by European labour? No; it certainly cannot. L. Hoey.
5177. Have you ever been in charge of a gang of European labourers doing field work? I was for about three months on the old Pioneer plantation at Mackay. 6 Feb., 1889.
5178. And what was the result? The result was that in about six weeks they cleared out and left one-third of the crop uncrushed.
5179. *By Mr. King*: What was the nature of the work they were doing? Cutting cane.
5180. Have you ever employed Europeans at trashing and hoeing? No.
5181. Have you ever seen them at work at it? Yes; I have seen settlers hoeing cane.
5182. But I am speaking now more particularly of labourers on wages? I never saw any of them doing that work.
5183. Have you seen any Javanese working in the field? No; we had a few Cingalese here.
5184. *By the Chairman*: What in your opinion is the most suitable labour for field work? Kanaka labour.
5185. You give that as your deliberate opinion, after seventeen years' experience? I do.
5186. *By Mr. King*: Do you think that white men can be got to do weeding and trashing? I do not think so; not in the summer time.
5187. Do you think if they would do it that sugar could be grown profitably with white labour only? No; it most certainly could not.
5188. *By the Chairman*: Is the health of the Polynesians fairly good? Yes, very good; with the exception of a shipload of boys we got six or eight months ago.
5189. Do you think that those boys were of the prescribed age? I believe some were under age.
5190. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you ever done any farming on your own account? Yes; I was brought up as a farmer.
5191. Do you think you could grow cane to pay with white labour? I am sure I could not. I would never think of trying it.
5192. Do you find it profitable to trash cane? Yes; we nearly always trash it. Sometimes when we have not the labour we burn it.
- 5192a. You prefer trashing? I do.
5193. It pays to do it? Yes; particularly with a good crop of cane.
5194. You look upon that as one of the necessities of sugar cane growing? I do.
5195. *By the Chairman*: Your sympathies, I suppose, are with your own fellow countrymen? Yes; as a rule.
5196. If you thought the employment in the cane field suitable for them, you would not give the preference to kanakas? Not if we could get white men at a reasonable price; but the price of European labour is too high for sugar growing.
5197. Supposing, for argument's sake, that sugar was at a high price, and you could afford to give Europeans the higher rate for their labour, do you think then that Europeans would do the work for you? I do not think so.
5198. Your experience would lead you to think they would not? No; they would not.

FRIDAY, 8 FEBRUARY, 1889.

TOWNSVILLE.

(At the Town Hall.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

The Commissioners received a deputation from the Townsville Pastoral and Agricultural Association, consisting of Messrs. E. J. Banfield, J. W. Cran, and E. E. Cowley. Deputation.

In answer to the request of the Chairman that the deputation should state their object in waiting on the Commission, 8 Feb., 1889.

Mr. Edward James Banfield said he thought the object of the deputation was to demonstrate, if possible, the disadvantages under which agriculturists laboured in the district from the want of water in the first instance, and other things.

The Chairman: We understand that the whole of the agriculture of the district is in the hands of Chinamen.

Mr. Banfield said there were several gardens in the locality where tropical agriculture and fruit culture could be carried on quite independent of Chinamen. It was not a fact that the whole of the agricultural industry was in the hands of Chinamen. They cultivated a good many vegetables certainly, and a fair proportion of fruit; but there were dozens of gardens carried on by white men. He might instance the gardens of Messrs. Bartells, Gulliver, and F. Johnstone. That showed there were plenty of gardens about Townsville where it had been proved that agriculture could be carried on independent of Chinamen.

Mr. Cran said there had been very little grown in the district except by Chinese.

Mr. Banfield said the deputation were anxious that Mr. Gulliver should give evidence in detail.

Mr. Cran said that was most important, because Mr. Gulliver had tried to grow vegetables in two different places and had given them up. It would be very important to know why he had given them up.

Mr. Banfield said there was one thing the deputation were anxious to impress on the Commission, that was that, although State nurseries had been established at Cairns and Mackay, they were very little use

Deputation. use to the Townsville people. Were a nursery established in the Townsville district it would be taken as a guide to show not only what could be grown in the Townsville district, but in the country extending out west to Hughenden. In Cairns and Mackay the conditions were similar, but they were not anything like what they were in the Townsville district.

Mr. Conley: Don't you think that private enterprise, like Mr. Gulliver's, would do as much to demonstrate what can be grown here as a State nursery would?

Mr. Banfield said no; because Mr. Gulliver had only lately begun irrigation. He had sunk a well 18 feet deep, and directly the water was applied to his orange trees they burst into leaf, and had borne a second crop. Mr. Bartells had had a similar experience. Only two or three years ago it was asserted that it was quite impossible to grow grapes, but Mr. Gulliver would give evidence to show that he cultivated over 200 varieties. Then Mr. Bartells reckoned that, if water had been available, he would have made a profit of £250 from grapes alone. He would have been glad to pay 4s. a thousand gallons for water. He reckoned that paying 4s. a thousand gallons for water, and using all he required, he would have made a profit of £250 on grapes alone. That was enough to show that the cultivation of fruit could be carried on successfully in the district. He thought that if the Commissioners had time to visit the Acacia Vale Gardens, they would find there tropical fruits that could not be found anywhere else in the colony—fruits of all kinds, both of a temperate and tropical character. The deputation would like to impress upon the Commission the advisability of establishing a State nursery. It was said that there was an area of land available, within close proximity to town, where a garden might be established at very little expense, and there was also reason to believe that the townspeople would assist it in a very valuable manner. He did not know that there was anything more to say, but he should very much like Mr. Gulliver to give evidence and go into practical details.

The Chairman: When you hold your annual show, where do the agricultural and horticultural exhibits come from?

Mr. Banfield: Within a radius of two or three miles of the town.

The Chairman: From what I have read, and what I saw here four years ago, there certainly must be something grown here of a valuable character, because I have seen splendid exhibits at the show.

Mr. Banfield said the exhibits at the show could hardly be taken as a criterion of what could be grown in the district, because the shows were always held at a most unfortunate time. They were held at a time when pastoral exhibits were in good condition, but there had never been a time when the agricultural produce of the district could be exhibited to advantage. In order that that might be done an attempt had been made to establish a horticultural show, but without success. He thought that everybody could see from the character of the trees in Mr. Gulliver's garden, and in the gardens in the vicinity, that the agricultural industry was worth encouraging.

The deputation then withdrew.

WILLIAM VILLIERS BROWN examined:

W. V. Brown. 5199. *By the Chairman*: You are a member of the firm of Aplin, Brown, and Co., carrying on business in Townsville and Brisbane? Yes.

8 Feb., 1889. 5200. You have had considerable dealings in sugar? Yes; as merchants and as agents for sugar estates. 5201. What, in your opinion, are the causes of the present depression in the sugar industry? There are several causes in combination. The first and most powerful cause is the very low price of sugar. The second cause, which is a temporary one, is the bad seasons we have had for the last two or three years; and the third cause is the uncertainty of labour. As regards the price of sugar, I may state that ten years ago white sugar was bringing £30 a ton. The same sugar is sold now, every year, at a price that reaches £18, and sometimes only £17 a ton. It is of course useless for me to go into the causes of the low price of sugar. That is a very wide question. I simply record the fact that the low price of sugar is one of the principal causes of the present depressed state of the industry. As regards labour, there is no doubt that it has cost considerably more during the last few years than it did ten years ago, but I think that has been compensated for to a great extent by the improved appliances and the better management of sugar estates. I have ascertained that under ordinary circumstances the cost of producing a ton of sugar is not greater now—in fact, on well regulated estates the cost is less now—than it was ten years ago. That is proved conclusively by the evidence of planters themselves in the Mackay district; so that the extra cost of labour in the past is not solely the cause of the depression. But the extra cost of labour—speaking now chiefly of kanaka labour which has been found the most suitable labour for the plantations—is a very heavy tax upon planters who have been embarrassed by various causes, as it entails very large cash outlay. In that respect the planters have been to some extent handicapped. Of course the seasons during the last few years have been dreadfully unfavourable to sugar planters, and particularly last season; so much so that at Mackay there was a very great falling off in the crop. That, of course, is an accident of a temporary nature; but I think, to induce planters to proceed with the industry in anything like a hearty manner, it will be necessary for the Government to extend the working of the Polynesian Act for some years, in order to permit of kanaka labour being continued for a further term. I think also that the Government should, as far as they possibly can, reduce the cost of importing these kanakas. I have been told—I cannot state it for a fact—but I have been told, that the charges imposed on the planters more than cover the whole cost of the machinery for working the Polynesian Act. The price of sugar is unquestionably one of the great difficulties, and it seems to me there is only one way of getting over that, and it is surrounded with difficulty—that is a reciprocity treaty with one of the other colonies. I have thought out a plan of improving the price locally, but I am afraid it would be impossible to carry it out, because a very small proportion of our sugar is consumed in the colony. The largest proportion, at least two-thirds to three-fourths of our sugar is sold in the Southern markets, but there can be no doubt that, from want of arrangement and combination on the part of the producers, the price of sugar is forced down to a very unprofitable scale during the early part of the season. Sugar that is now worth £25 a ton is frequently sold in Mackay, Brisbane, and Townsville in the months of September and October at £18 a ton. That is simply the result of injudicious competition. Every planter sends his sugar to a merchant who becomes his sugar agent. These sugar agents, particularly in Brisbane, keenly compete for business, and the result is that the price of sugar is forced down to an unprofitable point, to the injury of the producer. I

say

say I see no remedy for this, but still the fact is worth repeating. The present outlook is not very hopeful for the future of the planters, and unfortunately many of the estates are heavily encumbered, and I am afraid that a large proportion of the present proprietors will have to submit to the inevitable sacrifice and allow their estates to go into the hands of new people, who will have a very much reduced amount on which to get a return. That is to say, that a plantation costing £30,000 may be sold for £20,000, and although the former owner may not have been able to obtain interest on £30,000, the new proprietor may be able to make a very handsome return on an outlay of £20,000. That, of course, is the history of a great many of our pioneering manufacturing industries, such as our meat-preserving works.

5202. From your business knowledge can you offer the Commission any suggestions by which the industry can be improved? I have suggested two points: one is the extension of the Polynesian Act for a further term, and the other is a reciprocity treaty. I do not see any way of improving the position of the individual planter.

5203. Supposing that the importation of kanakas ceases on the 31st December, 1890, as now provided by statute, what do you think would be the effect of that even upon the plantations that you think may pass into other hands? I am very much afraid that a large proportion of the plantations will cease to work. (Of course they may find some other kind of cheap labour. They may be allowed to import other kinds of labour, but if the kanaka labour is to cease and the planters have to rely upon European labour entirely, I am afraid a large proportion of the plantations will have to close.

5204. *By Mr. King:* You have a large shipping business, have you not? I cannot say that it is a large business, but locally it is large.

5205. Are you agents for any of the steam companies trading to this port? Not for coasting steamers, but we are agents for foreign lines.

5206. Are you owners of other steamers? Yes; we own several small steamers running on the coast.

5207. Are you able from your business knowledge to state what is the amount of sugar that passes through the port of Townsville in a year? The estimate, of course, depends upon the crop. The sugar grown in this district, and which should come to this port, does not of necessity come to Townsville. Some may be transhipped on the Herbert River, but there ought to be about 13,000 tons pass through Townsville in a favourable season.

5208. What quantity of stores and supplies are imported for the use of the plantations—can you form an estimate of that? I could not give an estimate without some calculation. It could be got at roughly by taking the area of each plantation.

5209. Can you state it approximately? Roughly, it would amount to several thousands of pounds a year.

5210. Supposing that the sugar industry were to disappear, would it seriously affect the shipping interests of the North? Yes; it would do away with a good deal of employment now afforded to small steamers and small vessels, and it would throw a great many people out of employment—seamen and labourers.

5211. Would it seriously diminish the earnings of the large coasting vessels? Very seriously, because they carry the whole of the produce of Queensland.

5212. What result would that be likely to produce on the shipping interest? The immediate effect would be to reduce the number of steamers. That is all.

5213. *By the Chairman:* And profits of the companies? Yes.

5214. *By Mr. Cawley:* And raise the freights? Yes.

5215. *By Mr. King:* Would it be likely to affect the class of steamers employed? I think not, because with the decline of the sugar industry other industries would be expanding.

5216. What is the freight on sugar from Townsville to the Southern ports? It varies a little. The lowest rates have been: From Townsville to Brisbane, 10s.; Townsville to Sydney, 15s.; and Townsville to Melbourne, 25s. They rise sometimes 5s. above that rate.

5217. Has your firm owned any vessels employed in the South Sea Island trade? No; they have not, I am happy to say.

5218. Can you say what is the cause of the great increase in the price paid for recruiting kanakas of late years? I do not feel in a position to explain that.

5219. You are a director of one of the Queensland banks? I was a director of the Royal Bank.

5220. Can you state what is the rate of interest charged on advances to sugar planters? It varies very much, but the rate is about the same as would be charged to people in any other industry. It varies from 7 per cent. to 9 per cent. It depends entirely upon the position of the people, and their capacity to make favourable arrangements for themselves. There is no extra rate charged to a man because he is engaged in the sugar industry. I have known several cases in which 7 per cent. was charged on large amounts.

5221. To what ports do the small steamers of your firm trade? We run into all the ports between Port Douglas and Bowen. From the Burdekin River to Port Douglas is our range.

5222. What are the rates of freight from those ports to Townsville? They vary; on sugar the rate is about 10s. a ton, but on other produce, such as maize and sweet potatoes, the rate is about 15s. a ton.

5223. What is the rate on fruit? It is charged at per case. It is a very low rate. I should think it would be about 1s. per case.

5224. Bananas you carry by the bunch? Yes, usually 1s. a bunch.

5225. Are your steamers fitted for carrying fruit? Not specially.

5226. Is the fruit very often damaged in transit? Very often; not so much from the bad handling on the steamers, as from the delays that arise.

5227. *By Mr. Cawley:* You said that unless there is an extension of the Pacific Island Labourers Act, in your opinion the bulk of the plantations will close? I expressed that as an opinion.

5228. As an agent for these plantations and a member of a firm that probably may be called upon to make advances to them, for how long do you think it would be necessary to have the Act extended to give confidence to capitalists? I should think for five years at least to give confidence to capitalists and to give planters an opportunity of retrieving their losses.

5229. What are your total charges, as agents, on the gross proceeds of a ton of sugar, including all the Townsville charges? The charge in Townsville for selling sugar is 7 per cent, which covers everything.

5230. Does it cover insurance, cartage, and wharfage? Yes, everything but interest, which is not a charge on the sugar. I believe in Brisbane it is $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

5231. Have

- W. V. Brown. 5231. Have you ever had any complaints from planters about the way in which sugar has been carried in the steamers? I cannot say that I have had any special complaints.
- 8 Feb., 1889. 5232. You cannot say from your own knowledge that sailing vessels have been substituted for steamers on account of the damage done through handling and transhipping sugar? No, but I should think not to any extent. Besides giving confidence to capitalists the extension of the Act would give time for some other state of things to be brought about; something to be instituted that might lessen the evil of the abandonment of coloured labour. In five years a reciprocal treaty might be arranged.
5233. You are thoroughly convinced that some relief is absolutely necessary? Yes, and almost immediately. I suggest the extension of the Polynesian Act because I do not see any probability of any other arrangement being brought about immediately or soon enough to give relief.
5234. *By the Chairman:* Can you say anything with regard to other tropical agriculture besides sugar? Yes, the culture of fruit, particularly in our sugar districts, has made great progress and I think it might be extended immensely if the conditions were more favourable; that is to say, we know the soil and climate but other things are wanting.
5235. What tropical fruits can be produced in the district? I could give a detailed list of plants and fruit but besides we grow maize and sweet potatoes. In fact the Chinese succeed in growing English potatoes. We believe that we can grow large quantities of lucerne and oats and hay and forage of all sorts. Although these things have not been produced in large quantities, we believe that they can be produced under favourable conditions; that is, if we had better means of transit.
5236. Where do you think they can be grown? Chiefly in the Herbert River and Burdekin districts.
5237. Admitting that efforts were made in the direction you have indicated, where would be the market for these articles? There is a very large market at Townsville, Charters Towers, Ravenswood and Hughenden. There is an immense market at Charters Towers, as the Commission will readily understand when they think of the large amount of quartz carried every day and the large number of horses employed.
5238. Are the present means of transit from the Burdekin and Herbert Rivers at all calculated to facilitate agriculture? No; the very reverse. The cost of transporting produce down these small rivers to meet the little coasting steamers is altogether too great, and the steam communication, with one exception, and that is on the Herbert River, is not reliable. For instance, it is almost impossible to bring perishable produce from the Burdekin to Townsville.
5239. Then the same would apply with even stronger force to the Herbert? The same would apply because, although they have regular steam communication from Dungeness, the difficulties of the river make transit irregular.
5240. What do you suggest as a remedy? There is no remedy but a railway system. There is no market for our producers until we have the railway completed from Ayr to Townsville on the one side and from Ingham to Townsville on the other side.
5241. Do you think that if railway communication were established in those two directions general agriculture as well as tropical agriculture would be facilitated and increased? I think so. I think it would stimulate it very greatly, because the people are there and the land is there.
5242. As the owners of steamers trading to ports north of Townsville have you carried many bananas by your boats? Yes, we carry a good many from northern ports to Townsville.
5243. Have you ever had complaints made to you of the treatment of fruit on board the steamers? I cannot say I have heard complaints in the case of our own steamers, but I have seen letters complaining of the treatment generally that fruit growers receive.
5244. Would that apply to the treatment between the Northern ports and Townsville? I think it applies chiefly to the larger ports further south.
5245. Do you think that irrigation would have any effect in improving the position of growers in the district? I think it would assist materially, particularly in the Burdekin district, where they have great facilities for irrigation; but I think the great difficulty is the trouble of getting the produce from the places where it is grown to the centres of population. It is generally believed in Townsville that during the last drought, when we were importing even dairy produce from the Southern colonies, that we could have supplied ourselves entirely from the Herbert River, if we had railway communication, with fruit, vegetables, fresh butter, and dairy produce. I have heard that opinion expressed repeatedly.
5246. *By Mr. King:* Do you not think it would pay to have your steamers fitted for the conveyance of fruit in the same way as the steamers that trade between New York and the West Indies? I think the larger steamers might be so fitted, but the local trade is not sufficient to justify that. The interchange of fruit between the ports is not very great.
5247. Do your steamers not bring down fruit from the Johnstone and Herbert, which has to be transhipped into the larger vessels? Occasionally; not often. We bring fruit to this port, but as there is no handling there is very little damaged.
5248. We have not travelled in your steamers, but in the steamers we have travelled in we saw the bananas piled up six or seven feet high; that must of course crush those underneath; are they carried in the same way in your steamers? I should think not. We would have no need to pile them up in that way. I should think if that fruit was transhipped to the South it would be very much injured by being carried in that way.
5249. Do you not think it would be worth while to try the experiment of fitting the steamers with trays or shelves? I think the large companies that carry fruit to the Southern ports should certainly try it.
5250. Do you know what your freight from fruit comes to? I could hardly tell you. It is not very important, because the fruit we carry usually comes to this port only, and the interchange of fruit between the different northern communities is small.
5251. Do you ever have complaints of cases of fruit being broken open? I dare say we have had complaints. It is a very common thing.
5252. Is it the practice on board the steamers, — is it looked upon as a regular thing that a certain proportion of the cargo is braced? I think it is done occasionally, but I do not believe it is the practice.
5253. What sort of bills of lading do you give for fruit and other produce; have you introduced the condition by which you are responsible for nothing at all, under any circumstances? Ship owners try to limit their responsibilities as much as possible. Speaking from memory, I believe the bill of lading says that the fruit is carried at the shipper's risk, and that we are not liable for fruit perishing.

W. V. Brown.

5254. Would you be liable for theft? I should think we would be liable.

5255. Have you ever been called upon to pay for fruit broached? I could not say. I frequently have made allowances to importers of perishable produce who have made losses through the detention of the steamers. 8 Feb., 1889.

5256. Do your steamers run regularly? Yes.

5257. They have their regular days for leaving and arriving? As far as tides will permit. In the Plantation Creek trade we can only run when the tides will permit, but our Northern steamers run to a time table.

5258. It sometimes happens that the steamer is expected to leave Plantation Creek on a certain day, and does not leave for a week afterwards? That has happened more than once.

5259. Of course produce waiting on the wharf would be destroyed in that time? Utterly destroyed. I have known cases where the produce has been destroyed through the detention of the steamer.

5260. Would it not pay to run regularly to foster and create the trade? It would be impossible owing to the peculiar nature of the port. It is a bad bar harbour. In bad weather you cannot get in at all, and when the weather is favourable you must have high tides. It is impossible to run to a time table to Plantation Creek.

5261. So far as the Burdickin is concerned, you think nothing but a railway will suit that district? No.

5262. It would be impossible to make better arrangements to ship? Quite impossible to provide for the transit of perishable produce by shipping.

5263. *By Mr. Cowley:* You are agents for other produce growers? Yes; we undertake the sale of maize.

5264. Are your charges the same for maize as for sugar? I think they are slightly lower for maize.

5265. Do you ever receive consignments of fruit for sale? Frequently.

5266. Can you tell us whether those consignments have ever resulted in total loss to the shipper? Yes; I had a case the other day. A consignment was sent to the auctioneers and they sent down an account sales; the result was that we had to pay 1s. 8d., and the owner would get nothing.

5267. Have you had many complaints from fruit growers as to loss incurred? I have not heard of many losses that have occurred in transit. It is a common thing for fruit growers to express disappointment at the result. I may mention, incidentally, that Townsville is not a very good fruit market, as there is a great deal of fruit grown around Townsville.

5268. You say that your charges average 15s. a ton on produce—is that on produce from Dungeness to Townsville? Yes.

5269. What are the return freights on merchandise? I should say about 20s. from here to Dungeness.

5270. In selling fruit you say you place it in the hands of auctioneers; what are their charges? I think 5 per cent. in addition to any disbursements they have to make for wharfage and cartage.

5271. Do you get a commission out of the sale as well? I believe we get nothing, as a rule.

5272. What would be the total charge to the shipper of the fruit, less the wharfage and cartage? I think the owner of the fruit pays 5 per cent. and wharfage and cartage.

5273. You simply get the profit out of the carrying? Yes; we often undertake the sale of fruit to oblige people who ship it by our steamers. We hand the bill of lading over to the most reliable agent we know. I want to say this, in conclusion, with regard to the culture of fruit in Northern Queensland. I think it is likely to grow to large dimensions if judiciously fostered, and I think everything ought to be done to try and foster it. The soil and climate are admirably adapted; under favourable conditions fruit growing is a profitable occupation, and gives employment to many people, and I think the Government ought to encourage, either by bonus or in some other way, the bringing about of some system of fruit preserving. It is surprising the quantity of American canned fruit that is imported for the Northern market. Even canned pine apples are brought into Australia—they would sell well here, and I believe we could even sell them in California. In the Herbert River district the fruit literally goes to waste in tons; it cannot be got to market, and there is no means of preserving it. Fruit preserving is a most important industry, and every effort should be made to induce the Government to foster and encourage factories for preserving fruit.

EPHRAIM COWLEY examined:

5274. *By the Chairman:* You are a produce merchant living in Townsville? Yes.

5275. In the course of your business you receive consignments of fruit from the ports north of Townsville? Yes; I have had small consignments of fruit from the Herbert River and from Clump Point, just above Cardwell. E. Cowley.
8 Feb., 1889.

5276. In what condition have the consignments reached you? In good condition always.

5277. There have been no complaints of injury in transit? No; none whatever.

5278. What varieties of fruit have you received? Oranges mostly, and a few mangoes.

5279. What returns did the growers receive for their consignments? At that time fruit was very cheap, but I think they got about 8s. 6d. or 9s. a case. I have not had any fruit this season at all.

5280. Do you mean 8s. 6d. or 9s. a case net? Yes.

5281. Have you received any agricultural produce from other districts? Maize only from the Johnstone River, Clump Point, and Port Douglas.

5282. What have been the average returns for the consignments of maize? Northern maize generally realizes here, if it is in first-class condition, the same price as southern maize, but the bulk of it realizes about 6d. a bushel less. The average price has been 4s. 6d. a bushel.

5283. That is, the growers have received 4s. 6d. a bushel net for it? Yes; that is about the average.

5284. Is there any oaten or lucerne hay grown in the district? I do not know of any.

5285. *By Mr. King:* What are the charges of the produce dealers for disposing of produce sent to them? Five per cent.

5286. Together with cartage and wharfage? Yes.

5287. Have you ever had any case in which the consignor has been brought in in debt, as the result of the shipment? There have been such cases, but I have not had any. A reserve has been placed on the goods, and they have remained in the stores and become unsaleable.

5288. Have

E. Cowley. 5288. Have you heard complaints made by country shippers of produce that they are victimised? Yes; people have told me the same thing, and have asked me to take the produce, but it is out of my line. Strictly speaking, I am not a produce merchant. I only receive consignments from my customers. I had a note the other day from a man on the Herbert, telling me that he made about 15 lbs. of butter, and had three dozen eggs a week, and asking if I would sell them for him. I wrote back to say that it would not pay to send such a small quantity, and that the freight, cartage, and commission would swallow up the whole profit.

5289. You think that it is owing to the small quantity sent at one time that the charges exceed the proceeds? Yes; if a large parcel was sent, I do not see why they could not get a fair return.

5290. If these people had railway communication would that improve matters? Yes, most decidedly; it is the carriage and freight and wharfage that mounts up.

5291. What is the wharfage charge? So much a case, I think.

5292. What wharfage do they charge on bananas? I do not know. I have never had any consigned to me. I should say about 1d. a bunch.

5293. By Mr. Cowley: In receiving produce from the Burdekin or from Dungeness what is about the charge per ton? You have to make special arrangements. 10s. is the charge for sugar and maize, and 2s. 6d. is the lowest charge for anything—no matter how small.

5294. Have you had any complaints as to produce being stolen? Yes; we scarcely ever get a shipment without there being a few dozen oranges taken out. I think I had seven cases of fruit from the Herbert on one occasion, and only one was half full.

5295. Did you make a claim on the Shipping Company? Yes; but they do not recognise claims on deck cargo.

5296. Did you make a special claim in that case? Yes; I claimed for all loss.

5297. And what was the result? So long as they delivered the cases with any fruit in them they did not recognise responsibility. I get consignments of fruit for forwarding up country, but some cases are half empty. One case was completely empty last week, and after a lot of corresponding, they allowed for it.

JOHN ALLAN WALLACE examined:

J. A. Wallace. 5298. By the Chairman: You are Polynesian Inspector of the district of Townsville and Lower Burdekin.

8 Feb., 1889. 5299. Are you able to tell the number of Polynesians at present in the district? 543 on the 31st January under agreement; 10 exempt, and 20 or 30 walking about.

5300. How often do you visit the plantations? Every six weeks or two months.

5301. Do you make strict inquiry into the health of the islanders, the food they are receiving, and the regularity of payment? Yes; and I always see that they are paid. I have the dates of payment in my register.

5302. Do the islanders receive the money themselves, or is it paid into the Savings Bank to their credit? It is paid to the islanders, but at the same time I ask them if they wish to deposit any money.

5303. Do many of them deposit their money? Very few.

5304. Have you had many complaints made to you by the islanders of ill-treatment? Very few indeed.

5305. When complaints have been made have you investigated them? Always.

5306. Do you find them well grounded or otherwise? No; they are generally very trivial.

5307. Are they made against the owners or overseers? Generally against the overseers.

5308. What is the general health of the Polynesians? I produce a return which shows that. [See Appendix.]

5309. The return that you have just furnished is an accurate return of the mortality of the district? Yes.

5310. Why has the mortality been so great on the Pioneer plantation? The only reason that I can give is that the boys were of very poor physique. The deaths occurred mostly among the Santa Cruz boys. They were almost the first shipment we have had of those boys.

5311. You have seen that shipment of boys from Santa Cruz? Yes.

5312. Did it appear to you from your general experience as Polynesian Inspector that a considerable number of those boys were under age? No; I should not say they were under sixteen when they first came here.

5313. Did they appear to you to be boys suitable for the work on the plantation? I think so. Indeed the planters as a rule care more for the younger boys than they do for the older ones.

5314. How do you account for the mortality? I can give no reason, except that they were not particularly strong-looking boys when they first landed. The health officer passed them and said they were physically fit for the work. I had nothing to with their introduction.

5315. When you visit the plantation do you go to the hospitals? Yes.

5316. And you see that the patients are provided with all the necessary hospital comforts? Yes.

5317. You have never had any reason to complain of any of the hospitals? No; of course I have drawn the attention of the planter to the rate of mortality.

5318. The mortality on Pioneer did not arise from any unhealthiness on the plantation? I think not. Pioneer was one of the healthiest plantations I visited for the first four years. There was a heavy mortality at Airdmillan some years ago, and at that time Pioneer had a very small percentage of deaths. It is only since those boys arrived that there has been a heavy mortality.

5319. Have you ever heard complaints made that the kanakas are addicted to drink? Some of the older boys are.

5320. You know that persons illegally supply them with drink? Yes.

5321. Have you had any convictions in the district for that kind of thing? None. The police do not take it up, and I am under the disadvantage of being away from the district.

5322. Have you any suggestions to offer in connection with your duties? No; I have made out a summary of the working of the labour bureau. [See Appendix.]

5323. By Mr. Cowley: In sending islanders to the Lower Burdekin, do they go there direct or are they transhipped at this port? Transhipped at Townsville since I have been here.

5324. On their arrival here are they examined by a medical man? Always.

5325. A complete examination? They are not stripped. They are mustered and I call the names over, and the doctor sees each boy.
5326. It is not a scientific examination? No; they are not stripped. I have seen the doctor occasionally lift a boy's trousers leg to see if he had any sores about him.
5327. If a boy looks at all delicate is he put on one side and a thorough examination made of him? I have seen that done occasionally.
5328. When they are traupshipped to the coasting steamer does the Government Agent bring them to their destination? I used to send the agent down with them three or four years ago, but that is not allowable now. I have instructions that the planters are to take delivery of the boys in Townsville.
5329. After they are once passed in Townsville they are out of your control until they arrive at their destination? They generally go to the depôt for a day or two until the vessel goes. They may be in the depôt for a week or two, but when they leave Burns, Philp, and Co.'s Wharf they are under no Government supervision.
5330. Who pays the cost of their maintenance whilst they are in the depôt? The planter.
5331. What does that amount to per head per day? 1s.
5332. When in the depôt are they allowed to wander about the town all day? They are quite at liberty to go about the town. I have never known any to abscond.
5333. Do you see that on board the vessel proper care is taken of them? Yes; but they are only on board for about twelve hours.
5334. Are the bulk of the applications given in your labour return for mechanics, artisans, agricultural labourers, &c., for the plantations? Yes; the greater number of them. I should say at least 70 per cent.

5335. *By the Chairman:* Supposing anything were to occur by which these plantations were to be closed, how would that affect the labour department? Very greatly indeed. In my annual report to Brisbane I have mentioned that at least 70 per cent. of the labour is engaged for the plantations.

5336. Then the stoppage of the plantations would have a very serious effect on the immigrants coming from England? I consider so. I do not see any other outlet for them. This is a very depressed season of the year, but I do occasionally get applications for ploughmen, especially in the rainy season; but from May up to the end of the year there are any amount of applications from the planters. I consider that the closing of the sugar plantations would have a great effect on the labour market.

5337. *By Mr. Cowley:* Do the employers of this labour pay the passages from Townsville to the plantations? A free railway pass is given.

5338. Then the unfortunate men who have to take their labour by water have to pay, whereas the station owners get them for nothing? No; I always explain to the employé that the employer pays the fare in the first place, but if he serves his three or six months it is refunded. I omitted to mention that the fare is deducted from the employé's first month's wages, and is refunded on the termination of the agreement. That is embodied in the agreements, and is generally understood by the employers that I have had agreements with.

WILLIAM HELY examined:

5339. *By the Chairman:* You are a homestead selector on the Houghton River? I am on a lagoon near the river.

5340. What is the extent of your selection? 160 acres.

5341. How many acres have you under cultivation? I put in an acre of vines, and what sweet potatoes I use myself.

5342. How long have the vines been in the ground? Three years.

5343. Have they borne fruit? No.

5344. How are they growing? They are not growing well at all. They will not grow, because I do not understand the nature of the soil and I do not know what to put to them to make them grow.

5345. Did you never grow vines before? Never.

5346. Practically, you know nothing whatever about the cultivation of the vine? Nothing.

5347. Then you are not astonished at the result? Not a bit. I have grown sweet potatoes and English potatoes before.

5348. What success have you met with in growing sweet potatoes? I went to the trouble of breaking up two scrub turkeys nests and mixing them with cow dung. I had a good vine but no potatoes.

5349. Was there no one in the district you could go to to get information as to the growth of the vine? I had a Freuchman there.

5350. Did he not give you any information? He said the ground was too heavy, and on the adjoining farm to mine they could not grow sweet potatoes any better than I could.

5351. What do you propose to do with your vines? I will have to let them die out.

5352. Did you prune them? I cut them for two years, but they never grew a yard high.

5353. Where did you get your varieties from? From Toowoomba.

5354. From Mr. Hartmann? Yes.

5355. Do you know what varieties he sent you? I forget the names. What we are at a loss for here is an agricultural chemist. The people do not know what suits the ground. If we had an agricultural chemist here he could tell us what the ground would produce.

5356. If you had a nursery garden here would it not answer the same purpose? I do not think so, because on my 160 acres I have three different soils. I have black soil, yellow soil, and light chocolate soil.

5357. *By Mr. Cowley:* If you could send your soil to Brisbane for analysis it would answer exactly the same purpose? I dare say it would, but it is a long way to send it.

5358. *By the Chairman:* What is your object in coming before the Commission? To see and get an agricultural chemist.

5359. That, in your opinion, would help to improve the position of yourself and others? Yes; it would.

J. A. Wallace.
8 Feb., 1889.

W. Hely.
8 Feb., 1889.

SATURDAY, 9 FEBRUARY, 1889.

TOWNSVILLE.

(At the Queen's Hotel.)

PRESENT :

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

FREDERICK GOODFELLOW examined :

F. Goodfellow. 5360. *By the Chairman* : You are Land Commissioner for the Townsville district ? I am.

5361. There is a Crown Lands ranger besides yourself ? No ; I do the ranging myself.

5362. You are quite familiar with the selections in the Townsville district ? With most of them.

5363. Have you prepared a table showing the area of land selected, forfeited, and cultivated, in the Townsville Land Agent's district ? I have. Selections under the Act of 1863, freehold, 79,166 acres ; conditional selections, Act of 1876, freehold, 45,344 acres ; homesteads, Act of 1876, 6,847 acres 35 perches ; volunteer land orders, 2,500 acres ; 150 conditional selections not yet made freehold, Act of 1876, 105,676 acres ; conditional selections forfeited, 6,713 acres 3 roods 26 perches : forty-eight homestead selections, not yet made freehold under the Act of 1876, 7,731 acres 3 roods 30 perches ; nineteen homestead selections, forfeited, 2,781 acres ; 136 agricultural farms, Act of 1884, 25,780 acres ; three agricultural farms, forfeited, Act 1884, 452 acres ; approximate area of land under cultivation, Act of 1876, 400 acres ; approximate area of land under Act of 1884, 50 acres ; approximate area of land under cultivation by sugar cane, Burdekin Delta, Townsville district, 2,240 acres ; approximate area of selections under Act of 1863 and 1876, made freehold and not now occupied, 60,000 acres.

5364. Is there much demand for land in the Townsville district now ? Yes ; a very fair demand.

5365. For what class of land ? Mostly for pastoral purposes. On most of the land round Townsville the difficulty experienced is want of water and the suitability of the land for agricultural purposes, except in patches. That is the general complaint amongst the selectors. The want of water seems to be the great drawback.

5366. Whereabouts are the 136 agricultural farms selected under the Act of 1884 situated ? On the Burdekin, and mostly along the railway line between here and Charters Towers.

5367. Are you acquainted with the country ? I am.

5368. Is it good agricultural land ? It is not, in my opinion.

5369. It is the best available ? Yes ; within easy distance of Townsville. There are patches of very good land, but the majority of it is only fit for grazing purposes.

5370. On those selections which have been made freehold and are not now occupied the conditions were first fulfilled ? Yes ; but they were mostly selections that have been taken up on runs—taken up by the owners of runs, the conditions fulfilled, made freehold, and they are now used as part of the runs.

5371. *By Mr. King* : Are there any cases in which improvements that have been put on the land have been removed ? Not to my knowledge. On nearly all the selections for which certificates have been granted the improvements are still there, and the selections are nearly all occupied.

5372. Is there much country open for selection at the present time ? Yes ; a good deal of land about Townsville at the present time.

5373. Suitable land for selection ? Suitable for the class of selectors who avail themselves of it—for gangers on the railway line and dairymen. Most of the land that has been taken up lately is in small blocks of 160 acres.

5374. Is there any land suitable for cultivation that is open for selection ? There are patches in the parishes of Magenta and Wyoming that could be utilised for agricultural purposes, but not of any great extent. There is land in the parish of Jarvisfield that will be open for selection shortly.

5375. *By Mr. Cowley* : Out of the 136 agricultural farms taken up under the Act of 1884 there are only 50 acres under cultivation ? That is all that I am aware of. There are two selections on the Burdekin.

5376. Are the others all occupied ? Most of them, with the exception of those which were not confirmed. Fully two-thirds of the agricultural farms are occupied.

5377. Are they used for agricultural purposes ? Yes.

ARTHUR EDWARD DOUGLAS examined :

A. E. Douglas. 5378. *By the Chairman* : You have a conditional selection ? I have a freehold now. It was a homestead. It is on what is called "Double-barrelled Creek." I have a conditional selection in addition to that, situated at the 27-mile peg on the Northern Railway line.

5379. *By Mr. King* : What is the total area of the land held by you ? 270 acres.

5380. *By the Chairman* : You have carried on cultivation in the district ? Yes.

5381. You have grown tobacco ? Yes.

5382. How much did you grow ? As a trial I put in a quarter of an acre.

5383. What success had you with it ? Very good. From one crop I think I obtained a little over 6 cwt. of tobacco.

5384. How did you dispose of it ? I sold it chiefly in town. A good deal of it I sent as samples down south, and the remainder I sold in Townsville.

5385. Did you get the opinion of an expert upon its quality ? I did ; from Dixon and Sons of Sydney.

5386. What opinion did they express ? They pronounced it first-class quality ; superior to any that they had obtained in New South Wales, and of a value of 9d. a lb. in Sydney. The ruling price then in Sydney was 5d. a lb. for the best leaf.

5387. Will it pay you to grow tobacco at 9d. a lb. ? It would, very handsomely, and leave a very good margin of profit. I consider the expenses of growing an acre of tobacco would be about £40 a year.

5388. What

5388. What would be the return? The return on an acre of tobacco would certainly not be less than £120, because it produces more than a ton to the acre. A. F. Douglas.

5389. *By Mr. King*: What price did you actually get for what you sold? 1s. a lb.

5390. *By the Chairman*: How much land have you under cultivation altogether on your selection? About five acres. 9 Feb., 1889.

5391. Have you grown any tropical fruits in the district? I have grown mangoes, pineapples, and oranges. They grow very well, and bear well.

5392. What is the general price paid to the growers for pineapples and bananas? When pineapples are in season the ruling price in Townsville is from 2d. to 4d. a dozen. The general price for bananas is 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. a bunch, with something like 15 or 20 dozen on.

5393. From your experience do you think that fruit growing could be made a profitable industry here? I do not think so. I think that the Townsville market, which is the only market we can send to, is so glutted that we would realise nothing like remunerative prices. Another thing that tells much against us is the railway freight. There is the freight to pay, and there are delays in transit which all tell against the grower.

5394. But if facilities were afforded for sending fruits grown in the district to the southern markets might an opportunity not be afforded for making money? It would all depend upon the cost of transit. Our best market is the inland market—Charters Towers, Hughenden, and those places. If we had greater railway facilities we would have no difficulty in getting rid of our produce.

5395. What are the railway charges for fruit? Fruit in cases is charged 2s. a case for any distance under fifty miles. Bananas can be sent in bulk, but I do not know what charge is made upon them. I do not think that that is excessive. If there was a reduction in the freights fruit growing would pay better, but then I take it, it would have to be sent to a market where there is less competition than in Townsville. The competition is so keen that it does not pay. Cooktown, the Herbert, the Burdekin, and Port Douglas are all competing with the settlers in the immediate neighbourhood of Townsville, and those people are getting their fruit sent as cheaply to Townsville by boat as ours is carried by rail.

5396. *By Mr. Cowley*: Was the 1s. a lb. on the tobacco obtained in the colony? In the colony.

5397. Was that for picked samples or for all the crop? The best leaf.

5398. What would the crop average? It would average 10d. a lb. The greater proportion of the leaf was certainly superior.

5399. Was that price obtained after paying freight and charges? That was the gross price. Tobacco produces three crops in the year. The first crop is not so good as the second. The second crop is the best, and then there is a small third crop.

5400. Your £40 an acre covers picking and drying and everything, with the exception of freight? Yes; in fact, I think that is almost the outside cost of cultivation. I am calculating that one man is employed for one acre, but one man can do the work on two acres. I am giving the proportion of wages that it cost me for the trial which I made.

5401. If you employed one man for two acres, you could not get him under £80 a year, including rations? You must remember that there are four or five months of the year when the services of the man are not required, and he could be put at other work. Therefore, the man could only be employed for from seven to eight months in the actual cultivation.

5402. *By Mr. King*: Have you any tobacco growing now? No; the drought has destroyed all the plants I had, and I have not been able to plant. I have one and a-half acres ready to plant.

5403. Is it your intention to go on with the cultivation of tobacco? Yes; I have the plants very nearly ready for planting out.

5404. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you require much shed room for drying? A shed capable of drying the produce of two acres would not cost more than £15. The chief expense would be the iron. The sides might be made of bark.

5405. Do you not find that the insects are very troublesome with the tobacco? They are, unless a great deal of care is taken.

5406. Have you not to pick the leaves over every morning? About every other day.

5407. That takes a long while? You do not find insects except on about every sixth plant.

5408. What labour do you use for that work? My own children have done it. They pick off the little worms which come underneath the plant. I have only discovered a few, but I have no doubt they will increase. I do not consider that that is very much trouble, and cutting the plants is not very much trouble. I cut them and leave them to "wilt" in the field, and in the evening string them on ridge poles and allow them to dry. In six weeks they are sufficiently dry to pick. Of course these little things are tedious in a measure, but it is very easy work, and not work that you would put a man to. Children can do that kind of work.

5409. Do you think that if a man was cultivating twenty acres of tobacco, it would pay him to employ white labour to do the work? Yes, certainly. From the price that I know can be realised, I think that any man who had the money, and the resolution to cultivate twenty acres, would make a fortune at it. There is no crop you can grow so profitably as tobacco.

5410. *By Mr. King*: What description of soil is yours? It is a dark black soil with sand through it.

5411. Was it originally scrub land? No; it is land that has been washed over by floods. It lies in a basin, surrounded by limestone hills, and this deposit of 8 or 10 inches has been left on the face of the land. Underneath there is a rich clay. The general character of the soil is black to dark chocolate, with a mixture of sand.

5412. Is it well drained? Yes.

5413. The subsoil is porous? Yes.

5414. Is there much of that description of land in the district? Yes, a large proportion of it. The land from the 27-mile peg down to the old Woodstock Station is of the same character.

5415. Is it all selected, or is it open for selection? The greater proportion of it is selected round the railway line, but some of the land extending towards Double-barrelled Creek and Major's Creek has not been cut up yet.

5416. How long have you been on the selection? Over five years.

5417. What

- A. E. Douglas. 5417. What sort of seasons have you had during those five years? I do not see any difficulty with the seasons. Water is easily obtainable by sinking about 18 feet. I cannot see anything to prevent a man who has money and intends to grow tobacco from succeeding.
- 9 Feb., 1889. 5418. You would depend upon irrigation? Yes, on irrigation alone. I would not hother about waiting for the seasons. My own well is 23 feet deep, and I have never had less than 6 feet of water in it.
5419. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you do anything else besides cultivating your selection? I am a selector, and also have charge of a state school.
5420. You are not carrying on agriculture for a livelihood? No; I was led to believe by friends of mine that the land was well adapted to the growth of tobacco, and I have found it very successful.
5421. *By the Chairman*: Can you suggest anything by which the agricultural industry in this district can be improved? I think if I may be allowed to say so, that if the intention is to open up a rich district in the neighbourhood in which I am, extending from the 27-Mile to Woodstock Station, that is the direction that the Bowen railway should take. It is a fine tract of good agricultural country, fit to grow anything. It is perfectly level country to Avv, and there are very few creeks to cross. I have been over the ground. There are no engineering difficulties whatever, and the land is very good. It is not at present selected or thrown open. If the line went that way it would bring a very large agricultural population to the neighbourhood, and it would not only do that, but would open a good market for the Burdekin people and the western district. The general complaint there is that if the line goes to the Six-mile, they will have to deal with the middle men in Townsville, and thus they will be shut out from what they consider their legitimate profits.
5422. *By Mr. Cowley*: You were not brought up to farming? No.
5423. The whole of your experience has been gained on this selection of your own? I have had experience of tobacco growing before in other countries—in Arabia, Turkey, and India. I have a very good idea of tobacco growing.
5424. You have had practical experience? No; my experience has been gained by observation. The tobacco seems to flourish here better than I have seen it in other countries. The leaf is not so coarse and the tobacco seems to be of a better class. In fact the high price it will bring proves that. The ordinary price is 6d. and the tobacco I sent to Brisbane was worth 1s. a lb. I was told by a Brisbane man that the price he was giving for the best tobacco was 8d., but he said he would give me 1s. for the best of my leaf, and said I should leave the price of the other class to himself. I found that my tobacco made very good smoking tobacco.

THOMAS MARRON examined:

- T. Marron. 5425. *By the Chairman*: You are a selector in the Townsville district? Yes.
- 9 Feb., 1889. 5426. What is the extent of your holding? Over 5,000 acres.
5427. How many acres have you cultivated? I used to cultivate about forty acres, but I am not cultivating any at the present time.
5428. What did you grow when you were cultivating your land? English potatoes and corn.
5429. Did you make it a success? Not entirely.
5430. What are you doing with the land now? Dairying and stock raising.
5431. How many cows do you milk daily? 105 or 106.
5432. What amount of butter do you make weekly? 150 lb. a week.
5433. What price do you get for it? 2s. 3d. a lb. wholesale.
5434. Then you find dairying more profitable than farming? Yes.
5435. Do you feed your cows on natural grass? Yes.
5436. You do not give them any artificial food at all? None at all, and we have suffered for that.
5437. Was your loss of stock very great? Yes, very great.
5438. Can you offer any suggestions by which your industry or the industry of the farmer can be improved? Yes, I have tried farming land, and I have three or four market gardens on my property. The only thing that I see against it here is, that we have no water. We want to irrigate. If we have not the means to irrigate, especially in such seasons as we have had during the last eight or nine years, we will never be able to make agriculture a success.
5439. Who is cultivating your market gardens? The Chinese.
5440. They are growing vegetables? Yes.
5441. Is it for them that you would advocate irrigation? No, it is from what I have seen, and the way they grow their crops. I tried to cultivate before I had those people on the land, and I could not do it without irrigation.
5442. Your opinion is that farming cannot be carried on successfully without irrigation? Yes; that is my firm opinion. We have the water but we have not the means of raising it.
5443. Where about is your selection situated? On Alligator Creek. I have another property on Stewart Creek.
5444. *By Mr. King*: How far from Townsville? Alligator Creek is eighteen miles and the other place six miles.
5445. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is Alligator Creek where the gardens are? Yes.
5446. Are those orange and banana trees close to the railway on your property? Yes.
5447. Are they cultivated by a tenant of yours? Yes, a tenant of mine.
5448. *By the Chairman*: Did you plant those trees? Yes; about ten years ago.
5449. How have they succeeded? Not very well. They want a great deal of looking after. They want to be irrigated in the dry season. I have been here eighteen years now, and have had no return on my outlay or for my labour in consequence of dry seasons.
5450. *By Mr. Cowley*: How many trees are therein that orchard? Over a hundred.
5451. What rent is paid to you? Those trees are not rented. The garden is alongside of them.
5452. Who rents the trees? At the present time there is no tenant. The land was sold to a coal syndicate.
5453. Did you cultivate your land with your own labour? Yes; I had a ploughman to help me. I was dairying at the same time.
5454. What wages did you pay? 25s. a week.

5455. How

T. Marrou.

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5455. And rations? Yes.

5456. And it would not pay you? No.

5457. Not even with your market so near as Townsville? No. The first ten years I was here we had good seasons, but they have been falling off ever since.

5458. *By Mr. King*: What was an average crop of English potatoes to the acre when you were growing them? I only grew one crop. I think I had about 3 tons to the acre. We reckoned that a very fair crop.

5459. What do you reckon an average crop of maize to the acre? 40 or 50 bushels.

5460. You used to get that? Yes.

5461. How many crops of maize did you grow? Two crops.

5462. Would it not pay you at that rate? Not as well as raising stock and dairying. At one time we used to get 12s., 14s., and 20s. a cwt. for English potatoes, but for the last three months you could only get 7s. or 8s. for them. At the cost of labour it would not pay us to grow them for that.

5463. *By the Chairman*: Was it the bad seasons or the high price of labour that caused you to give up farming? The bad seasons.

5464. If the seasons had been good you would not have objected to paying 25s. a week to white men? No, could have made money in different ways.

5465. *By Mr. Cowley*: By dairying and stock raising and farming? I could have made on one what would have paid for the other.

5466. You would have made up the loss on agriculture by your profits on dairying? I could have made both a success.

5467. Do you mean by growing stuff to feed your cattle or could you have made agriculture pay? I could have done better by cultivating for the dairying and stock raising. They each would have paid and I would have benefited, while at the present time I am at a great loss. My stock have died and I have nothing to replace them.

5468. *By the Chairman*: Where would the water come from to irrigate the selection on which you are situated? Alligator Creek; but there is any amount of water from 8 feet to 10 feet below the surface. Where I live is the best watered country in the whole district.

5469. Would you and the farmers be prepared to pay a rate for irrigation works supposing the Government were to construct them? Yes, I am willing. That is the only thing we require assistance with. I got a circular the other day about a travelling dairy, but in my opinion we can make the butter here if we have the food to feed our cattle. If we have no food we cannot get the milk, and the dairy is no good to us. Nothing would help us more than irrigation.

5470. Do you mean to flood the grass land, or would you cultivate land and raise produce by which your stock could be fed? Yes; we want to cultivate the land and irrigate it.

5471. *By Mr. Cowley*: To grow fodder for the stock? Yes.

5472. Then you would combine dairying and farming? Yes.

5473. The selectors are not able to provide steam engines for irrigation purposes? They are nearly all "broke."

5474. On account of the seasons you would like the Government to assist you now? Yes; and I think I would be backed up by my neighbours on Alligator Creek and in the district.

5475. How many selectors are there in your immediate neighbourhood? All the land is taken up from there to the Houghton River.

5476. Are you on the coast side of Mount Elliott? Yes.

5477. Is there much agricultural land between Stewart Creek and the Houghton? From Alligator Creek to the Houghton it is nearly all good land.

5478. *By Mr. King*: Would the railway from Ayr to Townsville go through that land? Yes, it would go to the six-mile.

5479. *By the Chairman*: Have you any other suggestions to offer to us for the improvement of the condition of yourself and your neighbours? Not that I know of. I am only one out of a lot, but if the Government offered me irrigation plant on certain terms I would be quite happy to accept of it.

5480. You say the bad seasons have continued for a period of eight years? Yes.

5481. And have been more or less severe each year? Yes; this has been the worst of the lot. The only help we want from the Government is irrigation works.

BENJAMIN GULLIVER examined:

5482. *By the Chairman*: You are the proprietor of the Acacia Vale Nursery Garden? Yes.

5483. Situated three miles from Townsville? Four miles.

5484. How many acres does your garden comprise? Ten acres under cultivation.

5485. *By Mr. King*: What is the total area of the holding? Twenty acres.

5486. *By the Chairman*: You distribute plants and trees in various parts of the Northern district? Yes; and even in the South, too.

5487. What demand is there for tropical fruit trees? A fair demand. Nothing very great. The demand varies with the seasons.

5488. What number do you annually send out from the gardens? The average would be about 400 trees a year—that is mixed fruit trees.

5489. How long have the gardens been in existence? I have been there for about seven years. For four years I have been sending out that number.

5490. There has been no diminution in the number of applications for fruit trees? Only this season. In dry seasons like this there is no demand at all.

5491. Is there much demand for vine cuttings? A fair demand, but it has been supposed that they would not thrive here. Now, people are beginning to grow vines. My ground may be looked upon as an experimental garden, and as people see they learn what will grow.

5492. Have you had any communications from those who have already obtained trees from you? Yes.

5493. Have the trees grown fairly well? Yes; in some districts better than others. I have good accounts from Herberton, for instance.

B. Gulliver.

9 Feb., 1889.

B. Sullivan.

5494. How long have you been making experiments with the vine? About five years.
5495. Is it your opinion that portions of the Northern district are fitted for the growth of the vine? Very well adapted if they have moisture in the spring; if not, they throw their fruit in the rainy season, which makes it rather late for ripening.
5496. In this tropical climate is there sufficient time for the vines to rest? They do not get much rest. They remain dormant for about twelve weeks. They never bleed when they are pruned. I can prune my vines without bleeding any of them, and that is one of the best signs.
5497. Has your garden turned out a success? Yes; so far.
5498. What labour do you employ? Primarily I employ Chinese labour for cultivating the new land with vegetables. That prepares the land for my purposes. I grow crops of vegetables to pay for the rough labour, and as I improve the land I employ more intelligent labour as I go on. I keep one or two professional gardeners now, an ordinary labourer, and one Chinaman. I am working the ten acres with two white men, a boy, and a Chinaman. All the garden is now coming under the head of nursery garden.
5499. Is there much scope for the cultivation of pot-plants? There is not much encouragement. People get disheartened through the dry seasons and do not care to try again. Otherwise there would be a great demand.
5500. Then at present your attention is directed entirely to fruit trees? Fruit and shade trees. People are planting a good many shade trees.
5501. The continuous drought for a number of years has had a most serious effect on your business? This year I have done no business at all.
5502. What is your opinion with regard to the success of fruit trees in the Northern districts generally? My experience would lead me to think that fruit cultivation would be a success if the seasons were reliable or there was a more reliable way of getting water. Lots of old trees have died this year. I should have lost my trees, but fortunately I have a little irrigating plant and it saved them. I have a heavy crop of oranges this year. I had 500 dozen last year with a fair season. This year, with irrigation I shall have 1,000 dozen and have lost no trees. There are plenty of places, where there is water 14 feet under the ground, where people could grow fruit trees to advantage if they had the means of bringing the water to the surface.
5503. Have you found a profitable market for the fruit you have grown? Always. I have been sending my fruit to Croydon and Hughenden.
5504. What price have you got for oranges? They reach 1s. a dozen.
5505. Is that the net or gross price? Net price. I sell them on the ground at that price.
5506. Can you offer us any suggestions by which the growth of fruit in the tropical districts can be assisted in any way? Yes, I could give you a list of fruits that have ripened here which it has been said would not succeed. I do not like the way in which fruit trees are put in here. They are put in too great a hurry. To start on the cheap, people plant them in holes instead of trenching and draining the land properly. They do that with the intention of draining some other year, and they put it off until the trees become starved, and then they never do it at all, and never get the crops they could get. All my land is trenched 2 feet 6 inches, and two good soakings would satisfy the trees through a whole dry season. If people would till the land in the proper way at the first start they would be well satisfied with the results. There are many trees which are quick growing things in trenched land, whereas if they are put in ordinary holes they would be smaller the second year than when they were first put in. I consider this a very dry belt round Townsville and trees require all the more attention.
5507. By Mr. King: You have a large variety of tropical fruits? Yes, we try everything. I have a bit of ground which I use for experimental purposes.
5508. Do the people of Townsville go out to your garden? Yes; generally a few every afternoon. It has always been open to the public, and when people come out they sometimes ask questions and get a little information.
5509. Then it answers all the purposes of an experimental farm? It is an experimental garden really. When I first came here I did not know what would grow best, and I have had to find out. Of all the English vegetables I used to have splendid crops—cabbages 10lbs. weight, which I sold at 2s 6d. I had six Chinamen employed at a cost of 30s. a day, and it took about 40s. a day to cover expenses. I had good crops, but I never grew more than enough to pay for the labour? I had two years at that. I got my ground ready and then gave up vegetables.
5510. Does the orange moth trouble you? Yes; the same one that attacks the guavas.
5511. Do you lose much through the depredations of this moth? Last year we lost nothing. We gathered the fruit before it was ripe enough for them.
5512. You do not know of any method of preventing the ravages of the moth? No; unless the fruit is picked. It is only at night that they commit these depredations. They spoil all our crops of guavas.
5513. What variety of vines do you find best suited to the climate? The new American vines. There are many varieties of fruit trees sent up here for sale in the auction rooms.
5514. Do the American varieties suffer from any disease? No; they are proof against phylloxera.
5515. Did you get them from the Agricultural Department? I did not import them myself. They were imported by Hartmann, of Toowoomba.
5516. Have you ever received any plants of the American vines from the Agricultural Department? No.
5517. What season of the year do you prune the vine here? About June or July. We have to watch it very closely.
5518. What is the average cost of trenching land after it has been stumped? I have had my land trenched at odd times. About £50 an acre. I let a piece at £50, and the man gave it up.
5519. Was that by white labour? Yes.
5520. Do you find people desirous of obtaining information through visiting your gardens? Yes; a few. A man tries vines and cannot succeed with them; he gets plenty of wood and no fruit, and comes to me for information.
5521. You think you are educating the people to a certain extent? I have educated myself. The cause of the vines not fruiting here is that they get no rain in the spring when they are breaking. If they have to wait for the wet season it is too late, but if you give them artificial water and tie down the ends with wire they will fruit.

5522. You have arrived at that result from experiments? Yes; I have plenty of fruit to show. The vine has been pinned down to the ground and given plenty of water and its fruits well.

5523. *By the Chairman:* Do you grow the vine on stakes or trellises? Both, I find the trellises will be the best. They make too much growth for the stake.

5524. Have you communicated with the Agricultural Department in Brisbane to let them know what you are doing? No; I have had a few seeds from them, but I have not had any regular communication with them.

5525. Would it not answer your purpose to do so? I have thought about it. I wrote to them in reference to the experimental farm they propose establishing here. I told them that I had been here so many years and would like to give any information I could, but I should not like to see a Government farm started and selling the produce to pay expenses, in opposition to my private enterprise.

5526. If there was an experimental farm established here, do you think the farmers of the district would avail themselves of it? I believe they would.

5527. You have not the time to give farmers information? I give them a little, but I am generally too busy.

5528. An experimental farm established here for the purpose of giving information to the public, and enabling them to devote their land to a good and useful purpose, would not interfere with you, provided it did not compete with you? No. If the Government establish a farm, let them use the produce themselves.

5529. You are aware that the Government do not sell their produce in such cases? Yes; that would not interfere with any private enterprise.

5530. *By Mr. Cowley:* In fact it would encourage you? Yes. My idea is that an experimental farm of 500 acres should be taken up, on which water can be procured at about the same expense and trouble all over it. A man should be set down in the centre of that and let the people have the land all round. The result of their work on the model farm could be reported annually, showing what crops they have grown and under what circumstances, the cost of putting in, and what the crops are worth. That would be a sort of guarantee for the people. Of course there would have to be a reliable water supply.

5531. *By the Chairman:* You have experienced the benefits of irrigation? Yes.

5532. And you can well understand how the selectors of the district are situated? Yes, all the farmers have to drive their cattle about to the rivers, and they are supposed to supply the town with milk and butter; but besides not being able to supply the town, they are losing their cattle, whereas if they cultivated a little they would keep their cattle alive. We are getting butter and potatoes from Sydney which can be grown in the district. We are paying £60 a ton for potatoes.

5533. Have you any suggestions to offer by which the condition of the agricultural industry can be improved, or as to the fruits that can be grown, and what they are likely to produce and their value? The grape vine will succeed; strawberries we can get 3s. a lb. for, and get good crops. Pineapples, as a general rule, yield abundance of fruit, and are worth 2s. a dozen. Mangoes we can grow in any quantity. They are the most suitable trees for the district, and the fruit averages 1s. 6d. a dozen. Pomegranates grow well, but there is no great consumption for the fruit. They grow in dry seasons. Guavas do well here, although they have enemies. Custard apples do well also.

5534. Can you make any suggestions by which the industry can be improved, or do you confine yourself to the statement that irrigation is necessary? That is the principal thing, because we can do nothing without water. I may suggest the practical working of irrigation by having a model farm to show people what could be done with irrigation, and induce them to settle down and pay the Government so much for the water. I do not think you will get the people to settle down until it becomes generally known what can be done on a model farm. If they saw what a model farm could do, then they would be more eager to take up the land.

5535. Of course a model farm would show land irrigated and the effects of it, and land not irrigated and the effects of it? Yes; and people would find that there are many crops which could be grown here which they have never even tried. If they could see what could be done with irrigation they would soon be independent. We want the Government to start the matter. Rance fibre might also be grown here, and the Chinese grass-cloth does well here. A planter sent to me the other day for 5,000 plants to put on one of the plantations. Some of the aloes can also be grown for fibre, and we have a banana from which hemp can be made, which is something like the manilla plant. People therefore need not be confined to fruit or grain growing, for there are many things which are now imported into the country which might be grown in the North.

5536. You said just now that trees were sold here by auction? Yes; they come from Sydney.

5537. Did you ever buy any? Yes.

5538. What has been the result? I have been cautious enough to get pretty good ones, but I have seen people jump at some that I have passed over. I did not get many. I had to get a few until I could raise my own.

5539. As a general rule, you would not advise a selector to go to an auction room to buy plants? I have sold my own at auction, but they were fresh. I do so to raise the wind occasionally—to get some ready cash.

5540. But I mean as a general rule, when the refuse of the nurseries are collected and put into an auction room, you would not advise a selector to buy the plants? No.

5541. Are the whole of your ten acres under cultivation? Yes; every bit of it.

5542. You could not spare any portion of your ground at present? No; I should have to take out one crop to put in another.

5543. Would you be willing to allow the Government to place a practical agriculturist in your garden who would not interfere with you, but who could explain matters to farmers—would you have any objection to that? No; as big as we did not get to loggerheads. There are ten acres he might work upon, and I could lease that. There are no buildings or any accommodation on the ten acres for a man to reside there.

WEDNESDAY, 13 FEBRUARY, 1889.

MACKAY DISTRICT.

(At Habana Plantation.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

JOHN BRACKENBURY examined:

- J. Brackenbury. 5543. *By the Chairman*: You are a farmer living in this district? Yes.
 5544. How many acres of land do you own? We do not own any. We lease land.
 5545. How many acres do you lease? 290 acres from Long and Robertson, of the Habana Estate.
 5546. How many acres of that have you cultivated? About 130.
 5547. Upon what terms have you leased this land? We have leased it for seven years. We pay no rent for the first two years, and then £1 an acre for all we cultivate for the remainder of the time.
 5548. *By Mr. King*: Was this land improved when you got it? No; it was bush.
 5549. Was it cleared? No.
 5550. Fenced? No.
 5551. Any buildings on it? No; there were none. Mr. Long promised to give us 10s. a ton for the cane if he cut and carted it, but if we cut and carted it 13s. a ton.
 5552. Out of the 130 acres cultivated how much have you under cane? About 115 acres.
 5553. How many tons of cane did you deliver last season? Something over 1,000.
 5554. How many acres of cane did you cut last season? 110, with ratoons and plant cane.
 5555. *By the Chairman*: Did you cut and deliver it? No.
 5556. What price did you get for it? 10s. a ton; that is if we trashed it, and if it was untrashed we got 9s. Some of ours was trashed.
 5557. What labour do you employ? We have one married couple, and at odd times we have another white man and also five kanaka boys.
 5558. Are they indentured to you or do you get them from the estate? Indented to us. The first lot we got we obtained from the island, and their time is up. Some of them have re-engaged. They were working on other plantations before they came to us.
 5559. You are only one of many others in this district who are growing cane on the same conditions? Yes; I think they are all under the same agreement.
 5560. Are you satisfied with the arrangement entered into between you and Messrs. Long and Robertson? Yes.
 5561. Would it be profitable for men to grow cane with white labour? Well, I do not think so. In fact I do not think I would like to try; no, certainly not. It is very difficult to get labour up here; the place is too scattered, but in time you might get people to work for you.
 5562. Have you ever tried to work the land you have leased with white labour? No; not this land. I leased ground before, but then we only had twenty-seven acres between us. We used to cultivate that principally ourselves, and when we wanted labour we generally heard of a white man. But then we had teams at work, and if we had a man we did not like to discharge him at once, but gave him a few weeks' work.
 5563. *By Mr. King*: Did your cultivation last year pay you? It barely paid last year. It was a very dry year and the crops were light. A man like myself hardly knows what does pay. If I and my partner take a little wages we make money. We seem to get a little more money every year; but so we ought as we keep working away.
 5564. You do not keep any regular account of your expenses? No; I can only do a little more than write, and my partner can hardly do that. I do not know how it would be if we had to go into debt. Mr. Long stuck to us when we were short of money.
 5565. What wages would you expect to get if your partner and yourself went to work? 25s. a week with our horses.
 5566. Do you think you have cleared that last year after paying for your land? No; counting all the time we have been there we have not made that. Last year our expenses were nothing like so much. There was a short time when we did without the man, but if we set down everything we have spent we would not have made 25s. a week each.
 5567. Are you working your horses in addition to yourselves? Yes.
 5568. Have you had any experience in growing any other kind of tropical produce? A little maize and sweet potatoes. We do not grow them now.
 5569. What do you consider an average crop of maize in this district? It is generally a very poor crop.
 5570. How many bushels to the acre do you generally get? From fifteen to twenty. The maize does not do well up here.
 5571. What price do you get for the maize? We have been getting from 4s. to 4s. 6d.
 5572. Who do you sell it to? When we were at the Creek we always sold it to the plantation. We are generally acquainted with those who want maize and they give whatever price is ruling in Mackay.
 5573. It is more advantageous to you to deliver it to the plantation than to take it into Mackay? Yes; Mr. Long will take all we have got, and he allows us town prices. We have not so far to cart it and no commission or anything to pay.
 5574. Do you sell sweet potatoes? We used to when we were at the Creek, but we have sold very few. The kanaka boys like sweet potatoes. They look for them once a day, and would sooner have them than bread.
 5575. What is the average crop of sweet potatoes to the acre? 10 tons as a rule.
 5576. What price do you get for them when you sell them? When we sold them we got £4 a ton; but I do not know what they are now. £8 or £9 I think.

5577. Who

5577. Who do you sell them to? To the plantations. All the farmers can grow in this district goes to the plantations. We have nothing to do but to ask the plantations if they want a thing and they are generally bound to want it.

5578. *By Mr. Cowley:* How long have you leased this land? Seven years.

5579. Have you ever paid any rent? Yes.

5580. Regularly? We have never paid the full amount.

5581. How much have you paid? We paid £100 last year; the year before that £130 and the year before that something like £70 or £80.

5582. Then Mr. Long has forgiven you your rent to a certain extent? Yes; the seasons have been so much against us. One year we had no rain; and another year the rain was so heavy we could not get the crops off. This year we had a light crop, and I asked Mr. Long for a reduction and he made it again.

5583. Is not 10s. a ton, standing in the field, an exceptionally high price to pay for cane in this district? Yes; I think it is.

5584. Do you know of any other grower for this estate who gets 10s. a ton? No; I think the price is from 7s. to 8s., according to the quality of cane. Some of the farmers have been delivering it for something like 10s. or 11s. a ton.

5585. Does Mr. Long ever send men to help you if you are in a fix? Yes, he has done so.

5586. He sends you black labour? Yes, and anything we require; if I wanted a team of bullocks or anything else I would get it. Some of our ground is very heavy black soil, and it is quite impossible for the horses to work it.

5587. Has he ever found you any tools, or advanced you money? Yes; he advanced money for our first lot of boys, and he advanced us money for grubbing.

5588. You say that cane growing would not pay very well with white labour, even when Mr. Long cuts and delivers; if he did not do that would you be able to get along at all with white labour? No.

5589. Not even at the 3s. extra which he allows you? I do not think so. I would not like to make an agreement to grow cane unless I had the run of those boys. I would not do it if I could get a better job.

5590. Do you do anything else besides farming? No, not now.

5591. Have you children? No; I am not married.

5592. How many horses do you use? About nine—six for ploughing and one or two for harrowing. We have more horses, but that is about the number we employ.

5593. Do you find that the kanakas work well for you, or have you any trouble with them? At times they are a little trouble, but not much.

5594. Do you find them suitable for your purposes? Yes, very suitable. They are not very good when they first come here.

5595. Unless you could get black labour you would not enter into a contract to grow cane? No; I am sure I would not. Of course, this land of Mr. Long's is rather difficult to work, but there is ground about the lagoons that is not very much trouble to work; but at the time we were there we had plenty of money; the plantations were all starting, and we could make good contracts. The plantations used to let out contracts for ploughing, and we worked our teams. We had nine teams working at The Palms for a long time. We made over £200.

5596. You made more in those days by contracts than you do now by growing cane? By a long way. That is when we did make money. We do not make any money now. At times we make money, but it does not come in in the same way as it used to do at that time.

(At Mr. Denman's Selection.)

EDWARD DENMAN examined:

5597. *By the Chairman:* What experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar and other tropical products? Most of my experience was gained in Demerara. I went there first in April, 1864.

5598. What experience have you had in Queensland? Seventeen years' experience.

5599. What is the name of your estate? Etowra.

5600. What is its total area? 597 acres.

5601. How much of that is under cultivation? At the present time I have only about twenty-five acres of bananas and fruit trees.

5602. Have you grown any cane since you have been here? Yes; I have grown a good deal.

5603. Why are you not growing it now? Because it does not pay to grow.

5604. Will you explain to us why it does not pay? The reason is the difficulty of getting labour; then there is the low price of sugar and the uncertainty of the agreements made for crushing cane. One year I grew very nearly 4,000 tons of cane and another year 2,500 tons.

5605. You sold your cane to the neighbouring plantations? Yes; part of it.

5606. And how much did you get for it? The first year I got 11s. a ton on the ground. That year I had about 2,500 tons. The next year I had 3,700 tons and I got 10s. on the ground.

5607. What labour did you grow it with? With kanakas. The whole of the work was not done by kanakas. Part of the cutting and part of the clearing was done by white men.

5608. How many white men had you? It was contract work and I kept no account. I do not keep any books.

5609. And yet with such a large amount of cane you say you could not make it pay? It paid in those days. The labour was cheap and the price fair.

5610. When did it begin not to pay? The year afterwards I had to sell at 10s. a ton and cut and cart the cane to the mill, taking promissory notes at four months in payment.

5611. And after that you discontinued growing? No; that year a fire took place and about 3,000 tons were burnt. I had taken off about 900 tons. Out of the 3,000 tons burnt, 1,800 were taken to the mill and crushed, 700 tons that were not burnt remained uncrushed. The next year no cane was crushed at all. The price was 8s. a ton at the mill. Of course I would not accept that and I allowed the cane to stand. The next year 10s. a ton at the mill was offered, and I accepted it, though of course I considered it very low.

J.
Brackenbury.
13 Feb., 1889.

E. Denman.
13 Feb., 1889.

E. Deaman. low. That year, after I had taken about 1,000 tons to the mill, the boiler burst and they stopped crushing. This last year I took about 148 tons to the mill. A large area was left standing and it did not pay to bother with it. That was owing, in a great measure, to the effects of the cyclone in the early part of the year and the drought afterwards.

18 Feb., 1888. 5612. Then this year you have no cane at all? I have got a lot of cane that will very likely be fit for the mill if they give anything like a fair price for it. I have no labour, and if it goes to the mill they will have to cut and cart it. What I hope to do is to sell a great deal of it for plants.

5613. What is the amount of capital invested in your selection? That would be hard to say. I may tell you that all the capital in the selection has come out of the selection. I have made the place pay itself.

5614. Can you give the approximate amount? I cannot.

5615. *By Mr. King*: You must have put something into it when you started? Very little. Knowledge was the principal thing—the work that has been done on the place. To put the land under cultivation, to do what my tenant and I did, that is to cut the scrub, and clear and plant it would take about £2,300.

5616. What rate of interest did you get for that amount of money invested, say for last year? Last year I got nothing. The thing did not pay its way at all. Of course I made more in previous years.

5617. What were your working expenses for 1885? About £10. I keep no books but I know everything pretty nearly.

5618. During the years you have spoken of, when you were growing cane and the mill was taking it, what labour was employed? Kanakas.

5619. What were the average wages paid to the coloured men? I have paid £17 10s. At one time the wages were £6 a year, and then there was the cost of importation and the return passages.

5620. Then you consider the kanaka costs £17 10s. per annum, including his rations? No that is the amount I paid last year exclusive of rations.

5621. The boys you have now are time-expired boys? Yes. I pay one £10, another £16 10s., one £17, and one £18 with rations.

5622. *By the Chairman*: What description of labour do you consider most suitable for field work? Undoubtedly kanakas. I have had experience of coolies, Chinese, Africans, Portuguese, and creole blacks, in Demerara. With the exception of the Africans (I mean the liberated slaves brought from Africa) none of the others would, in my opinion, be a suitable or desirable class of labour for Queensland. I consider the kanaka the most suitable labour. I know that Malia has been named as a source of labour supply, but I have lived there some time and I am convinced that the Maltese would be most unsuitable.

5623. Have you employed European labour in field work, and are Europeans able and willing to do the work with horses and ploughs? In cutting scrub you cannot use horses. I have employed Europeans at scrub felling and clearing, and where they understood the work they made fair wages at £2 an acre for cutting and £7 an acre for cutting and burning off. I would only employ white labour to cut and burn off up to the end of February.

5624. *By Mr. King*: Have you ever employed Europeans for trashing, weeding, or hoeing? No: I have not. I have a European just now who does a little hoeing. He is a most willing man. He came out under indenture to Mr. Paget, but even with weeding among the bananas at the top of the hill the man was quite done up, while the two kanakas showed no signs of distress or fatigue whatever.

5625. Do you think that Europeans would be willing to do the hand labour amongst the cane? No: I am certain they would not. I have no reason whatever to have any good feeling towards the planters; but what I say is what I feel. It is a conviction that I have arrived at after a good many years' experience.

5626. *By the Chairman*: How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each black labourer employed? In cultivation would you include cutting, clearing, burning off for planting, weeding, trashing, and cutting and loading again for the mill.

5627. *By Mr. King*: Supposing you had 100 acres of cane, how many black labourers would you require to do the whole work? I should say a boy would do about three and a-half acres. He might, under exceptional circumstances, attend to five acres, but I think three and a-half acres would be a fair average.

5628. *By the Chairman*: Do the blacks employed in field labour suffer in health? No. Some of them are constitutionally weak when they are introduced, and require to be kept at very light work. Healthy islanders do not suffer. I think it would be a good thing to have a certain chest measurement for recruits. It is in the chest they fail.

5629. What tropical productions other than sugar can be grown in this district? Almost anything, except cocoa. The climate is not suited to that; but rice, coffee, tobacco, fibres, and things like that will grow.

5630. What labour would be required to render their growth profitable? You must have black labour.

5631. Have you grown any tropical produce besides sugar on your own selection? I have just tried sufficient to know that they will grow, but not to prove whether they would be payable.

5632. Can you state the causes which, in your opinion, have depressed the sugar industry? I think one of the causes is that many of the people engaged in the industry, both managers of estates, cane-growers, and selectors, had little or no experience of the industry when they entered upon it. A large proportion of the capital invested is borrowed capital, and a high rate of interest is paid. Kanaka labour has been very dear and scarce, and sugar has been low in price. Some years ago the proprietor of a sugar estate where I had charge of the mill at Inverness, made the remark to me, "There is nothing in managing a sugar estate. You have only to look over your neighbour's fence, and do as he does."

5633. Can you offer any suggestions by which the industry can be relieved from its present depression? As far as sugar growing is concerned, I have done with it at present. In my opinion the only remedy would be to allow no mill owner to employ more than fifty kanakas, and no cane grower more than ten. The mills would then become central factories; a fair price would be paid for the cane, and every one with land would grow cane; then when we saw the returns published we would be satisfied that they came out of the land, and not out of the banks and syndicates. There is another thing I would be glad to mention if it is not out of the way. The agreements in this district to crush cane are simply no good. You cannot enforce the agreement against the mill owner. If he refuses to take your cane you have no remedy against him. Some years ago a farmer, who is now a mill owner, made this remark:—"He had been trying to get what he was justly entitled to from the person who was crushing his cane, and he said, 'It appears to me that an agreement to crush cane is a mere tissue of fraud.'"

5634. Can you offer any suggestions for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing? Well, fruit growing does not pay. I am devoting my attention now to fruit growing. Last year the return would not pay two kanakas' wages, although I employed seven. My opinion is that we ought to stick to what we know, and what has been proved. In my opinion sugar cane is the most reliable crop, and it is adapted above all other tropical products to Northern Queensland; but it is also the crop that requires the most labour, and the cheapest labour too. I think it would be best to stick to the industry we know something of. My first experience in connection with mills here was with a Mr. J. E. Payne. When I came out here I took charge of his mill. Mr. Spiller offered Mr. Payne ten kanakas by some vessel that was bringing them, but Mr. Payne considered that white labour was more suitable and cheaper. He got twelve Danes and Scandinavians and Germans from a vessel that came into Bowen in July, 1872. The labourers were paid £25, one ploughman £28, and a blacksmith £52. I found it utterly impossible to do the work, even in the mill, with white labour. Of course, when one man gave it up another would be quite willing to try it, but they all gave it up, and especially the firing under the coppers. It ended in my having to employ two kanakas to attend to the battery, for which we had to pay 25s. a week each, besides their rations, and we had to get aborigines to attend to the cane carrier.
5635. *By Mr. King:* Then it is your opinion that sugar cane cannot be profitably grown without black labour? Yes; not only in the field, but in some works in the mill. I would not attempt to do it myself, and the labour must be cheaper than it is now.
5636. You said just now that cocoa would not grow here—for what reason? The climate is not suitable. It is not humid enough. The cold weather would kill it.
5637. Two or three hundred miles further north where there is more wet it might grow? It might, but I am speaking of this district; I still think that sugar would be far better, because cocoa is a delicate plant, and a storm that might do very little damage to sugar cane would wipe out a cocoa plantation.
5638. What do you do with the fruit you grow? I sell most of it in town. A great many of the trees are not in bearing yet. I am growing more than I can get a market for if it was all in full bearing. About £600 worth of fruit was destroyed last year by the cyclone.
5639. Have you exported any to the southern ports? No; I know others who have done so, and it has not paid. Fruit exportation will have to be done in a dry state. I know a man who sent some limes, I think to Rockhampton, and the account sales left him in debt.
5640. What price do you get for your mangoes locally? About 6d. a dozen. I supply a shop regularly, and have a better way of getting rid of the fruit than others.
5641. Can you dispose of all your mangoes? No; not in Mackay. This year is the year that mangoes should not bear. They bear every other year, but owing to the drought there has been a good crop. The drought has favoured the mangoes.
5642. What price do you get for your bananas? 4d. a dozen.
5643. Can you dispose of all you grow at that price? At a time like this we might sell several hundred dozen a week, but now I have not got many.
5644. What other fruit trees are you growing? Limes, oranges, and custard apples.
5645. Do they all thrive and bear well? Yes. What I intend to go in for more are limes. There is a chance. I do not see why we should not make as good lime juice as they make in Montserrat.
5646. *By Mr. Cawley:* You say you would limit the number of kanakas to ten to each farmer. According to your showing they could cultivate about 35 acres. Would a farmer make a living off 35 acres of cane? I well attended to.
5647. What price would you expect to get for the cane? I should expect 12s. on the ground or 15s. at the mill.
5648. Don't you know that it is utterly impossible for the planter to give that? No I do not. He can make a ton of sugar out of ten tons of cane; 15s. a ton delivered at the mill would mean £7 10s. on a ton of sugar; a ton of sugar should be manufactured for £2.
5649. What is the cost of labour in Demerara? It is all contract work.
5650. What class of labour is employed? Coolies.
5651. What is their average rate of wages per day? I could not say exactly. It depends upon the kind of work they are doing. The people working in the buildings would get 48 cents or two shillings a day. Some would get more.
5652. Any rations? No rations.
5653. Is that not about 100 per cent. less than is paid here? I don't think so.
5654. Don't white men get more than that? There are no white men employed in the mill on some of the plantations.
5655. Rations have to be given in as well? Yes; but you have one advantage here—that you can use implements.
5656. I am speaking of the mill now. You say that in Demerara the labourers get 2s. a day in the mill, and no rations. That is 200 per cent. less than the men get here? No; the kanakas cost about 2s. 6d. a day here, and they do most of the work.
5657. The bulk of the men in the mill are white men are they not? Not in the mills I have had to do with.
5658. Do you think a sufficient number of small farmers could be got to supply a mill of a capacity of 2,000 tons if the farmers were restricted to 10 men and the mill to 50? Yes; the selectors would let out their land. Mr. Long can get any quantity of people to grow for him.
5659. How many has he now? He has refused a good many. He has about nine. The greatest drawback in this district is the agreement. The agreements here are not binding. The manager of Farleigh made agreements some years ago, and carried them out for three years, but then the owners turned round and said their power of attorney had been exceeded, and they refused to carry out the agreement. On the other hand, if sugar had gone up in price, the cane grower would not have been allowed to back out of his agreement. If a manager or attorney makes an agreement it should be binding against mortgagees or proprietors.
5660. Then when the planters buy cane at 10s. a ton delivered you consider they are making a great profit? I think so.

- E. Denman. 5661. You think there are good prospects of the central manufactories succeeding? It will depend upon the land and the crops grown. The mill may be good, but the land not suitable. Then a great deal depends upon the management. As far as the central mills are concerned they might not do very well, but it will be more their own fault.
- 13 Feb., 1889. 5662. If it is a co-operative affair will not men get the best terms? My experience is that the farmers will not co-operate for their own interests. I know there is no market here for cane. If I do not send my cane to one mill the next mill will not take it.

(At Nindaroo Plantation.)

CELESTIN DUPUY examined:

- C. Dupuy. 5663. *By the Chairman*: You are a native of France? Yes; of southern France.
5664. Are you a naturalised subject? Yes; I have been for eighteen years.
- 13 Feb., 1889. 5665. You are a selector in the Mackay district? Yes; I have 180 acres along the beach.
5666. How much of it have you cultivated? I have cultivated 180 acres of cane, but now I have only 25 acres planted this year.
5667. How long have you been growing cane? Since 1883.
5668. What return did you get in 1883 for your cane? I had about 18 tons per acre.
5669. What did you get per ton? 14s.
5670. Delivered at the mill? Yes.
5671. What did you get in 1884? In 1883-4, 14s., and in 1885-6, 10s.
5672. How many tons did you get in 1885? At that time I had 130 acres. I had about 18 tons to the acre.
5673. What did you have in 1886-7? In that year the cane was burnt. I had some white men who were not satisfied with cutting and loading cane at 2s. 6d. a ton, and they burnt my cane. This year I lost my cane. It did not pay to cut it and I left it in the field. That was in consequence of there being such a light crop. I have been ratooning for three years.
5674. This year you have only 25 acres planted? Yes.
5675. What labour do you employ? I have four kanaka boys, and I employ one white man. The white man is so uncertain in this country. He is never satisfied.
5676. What amount of capital is invested in your selection? About £12 an acre for grubbing and planting.
5677. That is about £1,500 altogether? Yes.
5678. What about the buildings? They are not very large. The roof is only straw. The stables and buildings would cost about £300; it might be a little more or less. I have lost altogether £5,000. Every year I have had the selection I have lost money.
5679. What labour do you consider the best for growing sugar cane? If we do not have cheap labour in this country it is no use going in for growing sugar cane. Everyone will be bankrupt. You cannot depend upon white men. I had eight or ten white men, and when I most wanted them they went away. The country is dead if you do not have cheap labour.
5680. *By Mr. Conley*: Are you a member of the Farmers' Association? Not yet. They told me to come and I should join.
5681. Would it pay you to grow and deliver cane at 10s. a ton if you could get South Sea Islanders? Certainly. There is no doubt at all. You cannot depend upon white men. I know by my experience that if you do not have cheap labour the country is dead. I do not speak altogether for myself.
5682. *By the Chairman*: Are you growing anything else besides sugar? I am growing wine. It is only since 1882 I commenced growing sugar.
5683. How many vines have you? Only two acres. I neglected the vines for growing sugar, and I am going to plant them again.
5684. Has the growing of vines been a success? Yes; but the rainy season comes too early. Sometimes the grapes are not ripe in January, and the rain ruins them. I have made wine from mulberries. I have about four acres of mulberries planted.
5685. Are you able to sell your grapes in Mackay? There is no good market. Nearly everybody has gone away. About five or six years ago I could sell plenty at 1s. and 1s. 6d. a lb.
5686. And not now? Well, very few. Now they are only 6d. and 4d. a lb. Nobody has any money.
5687. And you are making the grapes into wine? Yes; I made seventeen quarter-casks of wine, and lost them through the burning of my cellar.
5688. Are your orange trees a success? Yes; they grow very well, but I have neglected everything for the cane.
5689. Now you are turning your attention to fruit growing? Yes; I am going to plant cane if I have labour, because the sugar is more profitable than anything else.
5690. *By Mr. Conley*: From your experience as a wine grower, do you think the mango juice would make wine? I could not tell. I have made the best wine from mulberries.

DOUGLAS GLADSTONE examined:

- D. Gladstone. 5691. *By the Chairman*: You are a selector in this district? Yes.
5692. Are you a member of the Mackay Farmers Association? No; I am not.
- 13 Feb., 1889. 5693. What is the area of your selection? Eighty acres.
5694. Homestead? Yes.
5695. How much have you cultivated? About twenty-five acres.
5696. What are you growing? I am growing maize now.
5697. Have you grown any other crop besides maize? Yes; I have been growing cane for years.
5698. When you were growing cane on your selection, was it a success? No; it was not.
5699. What was the cause of it not being a success? I put it down principally to the price of labour. I could not make anything out of it.

5700. How

5700. How many acres of cane had you? About forty acres. I was growing cane on some leased ground. D. Gladstone.
5701. Then, in addition to your homestead, you had a quantity of leased land? Yes; and grew altogether thirty or forty acres of cane.
5702. What was the yield of cane per acre? From 20 to 30 tons.
5703. What price did you get for it? 13s. delivered at the mill.
5704. How did you come to discontinue growing cane? It would not pay me. I lost money over it.
5705. *By Mr. King*: At 13s. a ton did you lose money? Yes. I had to cart it, and it did not pay at all.
5706. *By Mr. Cowley*: What distance had you to cart it? Five miles.
5707. What labour did you use? White men and kanakas.
5708. Could you give the proportion? More white men than kanakas I had at the time.
5709. Were they cutting and loading? Yes.
5710. *By Mr. King*: What is your average crop of maize? About 20 bushels to the acre.
5711. What price do you get for it? Sometimes I have got as low as 1s. 9d. a bushel for it.
5712. What is the average price? About 3s. 3d. is the usual price.
5713. Whom do you sell it to? The planters, and sometimes in town.
5714. Supposing that the sugar plantations were shut up, would that affect you as a grower of maize? Yes; I might as well grow nothing.
5715. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you owe your failure in sugar growing to having to pay white men? I put it down to having no reliable labour. You cannot get labour. Even last week I tried to get a white man, offering him from 15s. to 20s. a week, and he laughed at me. He said there had been plenty of rain, and he thought wages ought to be higher.
5716. *By Mr. King*: What capital have you invested in your selection? That is a thing I could not tell.
5717. What has it cost you up to the present time? I could not say at all.
5718. *By the Chairman*: How long have you had the homestead selection? Eighteen years.
5719. Then you have made a freehold of it? Yes; long ago. But I have not made a single cent since I have been here. I am worse off now than when I came here.
5720. And have been working hard all those years? Yes; and not a man worked harder.
5721. *By Mr. King*: Have you got a family? No.
5722. *By the Chairman*: After having had experience in growing cane in this district, what do you consider the most suitable labour for the cane field. Kanakas are far the best. The one thing we want is reliable labour, and you cannot have that with white men.
5723. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is your land under the plough? Yes.
5724. How much of it is under the plough? About thirty acres.
5725. Can you work that by yourself with the assistance of kanakas? I can work it with one ploughman and myself.
5726. It would take you and another white man to work it—if you could get sufficient kanakas to do the whole of the work but the ploughing, would it pay you? A man would make something out of it. He would not make a great deal. There is another objection to my growing cane, and that is because I am so far away from the mill. Of course I could make a little out of it. It would pay better than anything else to grow cane.
5727. *By the Chairman*: Have you grown any fruit trees? Yes.
5728. Were they a success? The flying-foxes always eat everything. I had about 3 tons of grapes last year, and this year they ate every grape there was.
5729. Does the vine succeed here well? In some years, and in some years it does not. The flying-foxes come in millions. You cannot see the sky at night time, they are so thick. Mangoes and custard apples they take in exactly the same way. This year they have taken the pineapples, and they are known to have taken the young coconuts. What we want in this district is very reliable labour, such as kanakas who will engage for a term of years. If you have to pay £30 a head it is too dear, and you cannot make anything out of them at all. If we could get kanakas for about £10 a head, as we used to do, we could make cane growing pay.

THURSDAY, 14 FEBRUARY, 1889.

MACKAY DISTRICT.

(At Homebush Plantation.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.
A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

NEILS PETERSON examined:

5730. *By the Chairman*: You are a member of the Mackay Farmers' Association? Yes.
5731. And you are one of the members chosen to give evidence before this Commission? I was asked to do so. N. Peterson.
5732. *By Mr. King*: Are you one of the shareholders of the Central Mill? No; I am not connected with the Central Mill. 14 Feb., 1889.
5733. *By the Chairman*: You are a selector residing in the Homebush district? Yes.
5734. What is the area of your selection? 144 acres.
5735. How many acres have you under cultivation? Eighty.
5736. What are you cultivating? Principally sugar. I have seventy acres under cane this year and ten acres under maize.

5737. How

- N. Peterson. 5737. How long have you been growing cane? Seven years.
 5738. How have you disposed of it? I have sold it to Homebush.
 14 Feb., 1888. 5739. What has been your average crop? If I did not include 1888, it would be about 18 tons per acre.
 5740. What was the crop in 1888? About 6 tons to the acre.
 5741. What did you get per ton for it? 10s.
 5742. Delivered at the mill? No; they took it off the field.
 5743. By Mr. King: They cut it? Yes they are not paying that now.
 5744. What is the price they give now? The new agreement is for 11s. a ton, and the grower delivers it on the main line.
 5745. Is that better or worse than the old agreement? Far worse, because as the crop was last year you could not even take it off at 8s. a ton.
 5746. What do you reckon with a fair crop the cutting and delivering would cost you according to the new agreement? You could do it for 3s. a ton; that is to say, by getting reliable labour.
 5747. Then the new agreement is 2s. a ton worse than the old one? Yes.
 5748. By the Chairman: What was the cause of the light crop in 1888? The principal cause was the drought, and if we had had sufficient rains the grubs would not have troubled us at all. They were only in a few patches.
 5749. What labour do you employ in growing your cane? Kanakas and one white man.
 5750. How many kanakas? Four.
 5751. Are they indentured to you or are they time-expired boys? When I started I had four indentured boys. Since then I have had time-expired boys.
 5752. What wages do you give the time-expired boys? £15 is the general wages, but then there is £1 hospital fee, and £5 return passage money, which you have a chance of getting back if the boy engages again.
 5753. What wages do you pay to the Europeans you employ? £1 a week and rations.
 5754. What description of labour do you consider the most suitable for the cane field? Kanakas.
 5755. Would a white man at £1 a week do as much work as a kanaka at £15 a year? In one way; the work that the kanakas do is not suitable for white men; they would not take it. If white men are pushed they will take a contract, but if they see anything else sticking out they might leave off in the middle of their work or go on the spree. They will not take the work the kanakas are doing so long as they can get anything else. There are certain parts of the work which are right enough for white men, but when it comes to hoeing, trashing, and cutting, those occupations are not suitable for a white man in this climate.
 5756. Has the growing of cane so far been profitable to you? In one sort of way it has, until last year. Last year I lost heavily.
 5757. What has your selection cost you altogether—what capital have you invested in it? £1,000.
 5758. Have you received interest on that outlay besides supporting yourself and family? No.
 5759. Supposing that the importation of kanakas ceases on the 31st December, 1890, what effect is that likely to have upon you? I will have to stop altogether; I could not work. Even last year I lost with kanakas. I worked very hard myself all the time, and had very little white labour, and I still lost about £200. With a season like last year it does not even pay with kanakas.
 5760. You use ploughs and other agricultural implements in cultivating your ground? Yes; all sorts of implements to do the work in a proper manner.
 5761. You came from Denmark? No; Sweden.
 5762. Do you think your own countrymen would do the work you are doing? Yes; the same work that I am doing, but I am not hoeing or trashing. I am simply looking after the horse work—ploughing and harrowing.
 5763. Would you care to put your countrymen at the work that the kanakas do? No; because they can do better at home. Sugar cane cannot be grown without cheap reliable labour, and that cannot be depended upon with white men. If a white man worked for 8s. or 9s. a week and if he was married he could not live here. He could live better at home. It would not pay my countrymen to come here. We would rather tell them to stay where they are.
 5764. Is the opinion that you have now expressed, the opinion of the members of the Farmer's Association? I cannot answer for them all, but I think it is. They have not had a meeting to discuss that point, but that is the opinion of a great number of them.
 5765. You were not authorised to state that for the Association? No; that is my own opinion.
 5766. By Mr. King: What are the wages of an agricultural labourer in your country? I could not say what the wages are at present. There are different wages. About 100 dollars were the wages for a good man when I left home. There are eighteen rix-dollars to the pound. I have heard since that they get more, but I am not sure.
 5767. That is about £5 10s. a year? Yes; and rations. That is what they got when I was at home, but that is about twenty years ago.
 5768. Have you been able to get as much kanaka labour as you wanted? Yes.
 5769. If you got as much kanaka labour as you wanted, would you be able to grow cane at the price the company are now offering? No; I could not. It would be right enough in a fair season if you could rely upon a fair crop of 18 tons to the acre. You could just pull through then, but there would be nothing to gain by it. My opinion is that the cane is worth more than they are giving for it. Then again, we are subject to ill-treatment by the mills. For instance, delay in taking off the crop. They kept me three months before taking the crop off, and the season before a lot was thrown away.
 5770. In any central mill that would be the case, would it not. They cannot take all the cane at once? In some cases it could be taken, but there is often mismanagement. In a season with heavy frost the stripped cane is killed quicker than the untrashed cane, and if the cane is neglected you get nothing out of it.
 5771. By Mr. Couley: How many white men do you employ besides yourself? One, and not all the year round.
 5772. Have you a family? No.
 5773. What do you do with the maize you grow? I feed my own horses with it and sell some. I have not grown much before this season. The first year I grew three or four acres. Of course I grow sweet potatoes for my own use.
 5774. In

5774. In the event of Homebush mill closing what would be the result to you? I would have to do the best I could for a living. N. Peterson.

5775. Is there anything else you could grow for a living? I dare say, with one thing and another, I might make a living: with cattle and fruit trees, and one thing and another. In fact, that would be more to be depended on than sugar. 14 Feb., 1889.

5776. If you could get kanakas at £6 a year, could you grow cane at 11s. a ton? Yes; but I would rather have the kanakas I am paying £15 a year to than those I am paying £6. The first year I got four, one was a gin and one died, so that I lost £16. Another was not exactly fit for the work. Those four cost me more at £6 a head than the overtime boys do at £15, because the overtime boys are used to the climate and are healthy and do their work. You do not need to show them and staid and watch them. If I have old boys used to the work I tell them to go out into the field, and they stop there without watching so long as you treat them properly. In fact they are more happy than their masters.

5777. Do any of these men plough or scarify? Not plough, they scarify.

5778. They work the horse hoe between the cane? Yes.

5779. *By the Chairman:* In the event of sugar failing, are there any other articles of produce that you could grow? I dare say there are, but we do not know really what we could grow. We should have to gain our experience first.

5780. *By Mr. Cooley:* In the event of you being able to grow anything, could you grow with white labour only? It depends upon what we were growing. Fruit trees I dare say you could grow, but I have had no experience with them and I do not know how it would pay. I have some orange trees and they seem to grow very well.

5781. How are you paid for your cane? I am paid for it when it is delivered at the mill. We can get money in advance if we ask for it, but if not we are paid cash on delivery.

5782. How much advance will the company give you on the crop? I forget the principle of it.

5783. Does the advance, whatever it may be, bear interest? They charge 6 per cent. interest. I have not had any money from them in advance for some years.

5784. Do you do any work besides cane growing or do you confine your labour to your own selection? I work on my own place.

5785. *By the Chairman:* You said just now that the wages of an agricultural labourer in Sweden were £5 10s. a year and rations? That was twenty years ago.

5786. Don't you think that many of your countrymen would come out to Mackay when the wages are £32 a year and rations? We could not afford to pay that. Those are the wages of ploughmen. When we come to the weeding, hoeing, and trashing, such as the kanakas are doing, we could not afford to pay a white man more than 8s. a week. If we cannot get some cheap labour we cannot get along. We could not pay the present labour £1 per week. If each man was paid alike the general wages would be something like 10s. a week. The kanakas work for small wages and suit the work better than white men, and so we can afford to pay white men more.

5787. You said you did not think you were getting a sufficient price for the cane? The new agreement price is not sufficient. My agreement is for 10s. a ton and the company takes it off.

5788. Would not the central mill cure that difficulty? I cannot see how it could. Before the central mill was started I saw a statement about an average crop being 35 tons to the acre, but that is all false. That might have been the crop one season, but it is not the average. We could all state that we have had an acre that gave 40 tons, but what is the use of that when all the other ground yields is 12 tons to the acre. I saw that statement made and I consider it is wrong.

5789. Then you do not think the central mill will improve the position of the sugar growers? I think it will do a great deal towards it. No doubt the central mill will give as much as can be given to the farmers who are growing cane for it. As it was before the planters had it all in their own hands. If I was a farmer close to a mill, I had to depend upon that mill only, and the planter gave me 7s. or 8s. or 9s. a ton for my cane, and I had to sell it or let it stand. As it is now, the central mills will be in opposition, and will be able to fix the price of cane.

5790. *By Mr. Cooley:* If there are any profits of course the shareholders get their share? Yes.

5791. They have to bear their share of the loss as well? Yes; and a great one, too. If they get favourable seasons they would stand a better show.

ROBERT NEWMAN BRIDGEMAN examined:

5792. *By the Chairman:* You are a selector living in this district? I have been. I am an employé of the Company now. I am assistant agricultural manager at Homebush. R. N. Bridgeman.

5793. *By Mr. King:* You had a selection? Yes; I have been growing cane on my selection, until this year, for the last fifteen or sixteen years, but bad seasons compelled me to sell the selection. 14 Feb., 1889.

5794. What was the area of your selection? 1,743 acres.

5795. What did you do with it? I grew 200 acres of cane, and before I came to Homebush I was growing cane and tobacco near to Mackay.

5796. What has become of your selection? I sold it to the company.

5797. Why did you sell it? I could not afford to carry it on any longer. I lost all the capital I had, and with bad prospects I considered it better to sell to the company when they gave me a good offer.

5798. How much did you lose on it? I lost in reality about £1,600 and I was in debt about £7,000. I put £1,600 cash into the selection when I started in 1881, and I was £7,000 in debt when I left it in 1888.

5799. What did you do with your cane? I sold it to the company. I had a contract with them.

5800. At what price? 12s. a ton delivered on the trucks. The company had the line of 650 yards, and I contracted the same as other selectors did.

5801. Could you not make it pay at 12s. a ton? One season when I had a good crop I made a little; but then I do not think I made 3 per cent. on my capital. I cleared expenses and had a few pounds to carry on for another year; but I was getting deeper into debt.

5802. What labour did you employ? I generally kept four white men for ploughing, and thirty-five kanakas when I started. As their time expired I could not afford to engage others, and hired them from the company at the usual rate of £1 a week. One year I had Javanese and another season Chinese to take off the crop; but they were a failure. 5803. What

R. N.
Bridgeman.
14 Feb., 1889.

5803. What do you consider the most suitable labour for field work? Kanaka labour is the only labour I have ever met with yet that could do the work to advantage at all. I tried whites on one occasion, and I think they were the worst of any. I had fourteen new chums, but they were very much of a failure.
5804. Would it be possible, in your opinion, to grow cane with white labour only? I think it would be utterly impossible.
5805. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you had experience in growing tobacco? Yes; for seven years.
5806. How many acres did you grow? I grew myself about fifteen acres, and I used to buy from a number of other growers.
5807. Did that pay? The manufacture paid very well, but the growing did not. A small selector with a family of three or four could grow a couple of acres very profitably, with the children to attend to it. To grow tobacco you want a lot of small cheap labour.
5808. What crop did you get on an average per acre? About a quarter of a ton. The heaviest crop I ever had was half-a-ton to the acre, and the lightest, ten pounds.
5809. What price did you pay for tobacco to other growers? I paid an average of 1s. a pound. There were in those days a great many people manufacturing tobacco. I got 3s. a pound at that time; but at present the same tobacco sells for 1s. 8d.
5810. Did you ever employ a good many aborigines? Yes.
5811. Did they assist you materially? You could not depend upon them. If one could get a mob and keep them a month, they would do very well, but they got discontented and cleared out.
5812. After your seven years' experience in tobacco growing do you think it would pay white men to grow it? Small selectors might grow small quantities. I think a man could make a living out of it.
5813. That is always providing he has his children to do the light labour? Yes, or other means of getting cheap labour when he wants it.
5814. *By Mr. King*: Had you any experience in tobacco growing before? No; I never saw a leaf of tobacco growing before I started in Mackay in 1873.
5815. Was your tobacco examined by experts? I gained a prize at the show two or three times, and in Sydney I got a certificate of merit, but no prize. It was tobacco that a man who could not afford to smoke anything else used to smoke, and say it was very good.
5816. But did you never submit your leaf to any judges? No; during the time I was growing it I never met an expert.
5817. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did you ever sell any leaf in the Sydney or Brisbane market? No, the manufacturer I had was supposed to be an expert, and he always considered my leaf very good.
5818. *By the Chairman*: Do you know that in several parts of New South Wales, and at Texas in Queensland, tobacco can be grown easily by the white population? I have heard so.
5819. If it can be grown profitably there by white labour, why not here? Probably their seasons are more regular, and they can depend upon a regular rainfall. The season we had half a ton to the acre we had thunderstorms twice a week.
5820. There are several million pounds of tobacco leaf grown annually in New South Wales. Surely, if it can be grown there, it can be grown here? I suppose the district is more thickly populated there, and they can get children or men just when they are wanted. You only require labour perhaps for a month.
5821. When a man says, "I will not do anything unless you give me black labour," when he knows other things can be grown by white labour, what can you think of him? I am not a stickler for black labour. If we were near a large town where we could send to an orphanage or benevolent asylum for a lot of old women or men or children, then we might grow tobacco.
5822. But the labour is done by strong, stalwart men in New South Wales, and why not here? I am not aware of it.
5823. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have you had any experience of New South Wales? Not of agricultural land.
5824. Is not insect life more abundant here? I should think so, from what I remember. The district I was living in in New South Wales was one of the driest.
5825. Does not a great part of the labour in tobacco growing consist of picking off the grubs? Yes; a child of three years old can do as much as a grown man. When I was growing I also employed a large flock of turkeys to pick off the grubs.

OLE MATSEN examined:

O. Matsen.
14 Feb., 1889.

5826. *By the Chairman*: Are you a member of the Farmers' Association? No, I am not.
5827. You are a selector living in the Homebush district? I have a farm on lease for five years.
5828. From whom do you lease the land? Mr. A. Diehm, of Mackay.
5829. He is a fellow countryman of yours? No, he is a German and I am a Dane.
5830. What do you grow on this leased farm? Sugar cane.
5831. How many acres have you under cultivation? I have fifty acres under cane, and I am getting about twenty-five more under tillage.
5832. How long have you been growing cane? For two years.
5833. Have you sold a crop yet? Yes; two crops.
5834. Who did you sell it to? The Homebush Company.
5835. What did you get for it? 11s. a ton.
5836. What was your average crop of sugar cane per acre? The first year I had altogether a little over 200 tons, and last year I had 280 tons.
5837. *By Mr. King*: How many acres did you cut last year? Twenty-two acres.
5838. *By the Chairman*: What labour did you employ? I had four kanaka boys and myself.
5839. Have you a family? Yes; I have a wife and family.
5840. Were your labourers time-expired boys? Yes.
5841. What wages did you give them? £15 a year.
5842. You employed no white men? I had a white man there for three months in 1888.
5843. Would it pay you to grow sugar cane at 11s. a ton with white labour? No; it would not. It could not be done.
5844. Supposing you were not able to get kanakas, what would you grow then? I would have to give up cane growing and tackle something else.

5845. You

5845. You would not undertake to lease the land and grow cane without kanaka labour? I would not, O. Matsen.
and I could not.
5846. *By Mr. Cowley*: What rent do you pay? I have to pay 2s. a tou to Mr. Diehm for the use of 14 Feb., 1889.
5847. *By Mr. King*: What are the wages of an agricultural labourer in Denmark? They were £8 or £9 a year seventeen years ago.
5848. And rations? Ycs.
5849. If you could get those men out here, would they be able to do the work that kanakas are doing now—would they be willing? They could not do it and they would not be willing. I have seen white men working here without any success whatever. In 1874 I was on the Pioneer. They were without kanakas for ten months and about 150 white men were employed, but it was almost impossible to get the work done at the time. The only way in which white labour will pay is by contract, but you cannot get the field work done to satisfaction. For cutting firewood and fencing they are alright, but for field work white men are not suitable.
5850. How many acres do you lease? For what I clear I have nothing to pay, but the land that was cleared when I took it I pay rent for.
5851. *By Mr. King*: If you were not farming yourself and were looking for a job would you take work at hoeing, or trashing, or weeding cane? If compelled to do so. If I could get nothing else I should have to do it. Otherwise I would leave the district before I would tackle it. The only work that is suitable for Europeans in this district is working the horses and ploughing.

HANS CHRISTIAN CHRISTISON, examined:

5852. *By the Chairman*: Are you a farmer residing in the Homebush district? Yes.
5853. What is the extent of your selection? Only sixty acres.
5854. Is that a homestead? No, I purchased it.
5855. How many acres out of the sixty have you cultivated? I have twenty-five acres cultivated and thirty acres reuted from another man.
5856. What are you growing? Sugar-cane.
5857. On the whole fifty-five acres? I have forty acres to crush every year.
5858. Do you crush the cane or sell it? I sell it at Homebush mill.
5859. What has been your average yield of cane per acre? From 18 to 20 tons per acre.
5860. And last year? That has been the average all through.
5861. What price do you get for it? I have had 8s. a ton for the last two years. Before that I was getting 10s. When getting 10s. I had to cut and load it.
5862. You do not cut and load it for 8s.? No; if I cut and load it now they give me 11s.
5863. What labour do you employ in growing the sugar cane? I am employiog kanaka boys, and I have a few boys of my own.
5864. You have a grown-up family? Yes.
5865. *By Mr. King*: Are you working on the selection yourself? Ycs.
5866. How many of your sons are working with you? There are two.
5867. How many kanakas have you employed? At the present time I have two, but I have had one at other times.
5868. Are they time expired boys? Yes.
5869. What do you pay them? £15 a year and rations; £1 for hospital fee, and 2s. 6d. agreement.
5870. What do you consider the most reliable labour for growing sugar cane? Kanaka boys. I have tried white labour for cutting cane, but it is not reliable? Sometimes two or three were away for a day or two drinking.
5871. *By Mr. Cowley*: Can your own sons do the work that the kanakas are doing? Yes; they have done so.
5872. Have they sustained any harm from doing it? They have done the same work that the boys are doing, trashing and hoeing in the cane.
5873. If your two sons are capable of working in the cane field, do not you think that white men generally are capable of doing it? Yes; but they are not willing to do so. One of my sons is away. My other two boys are at home, and they have to work for their living as well as I have.
5874. Then you think it is the knowledge that sons are working on their own account that encourages them to do it? They are not quite able to go out on their own account yet, and they have to do something at home. If they could get out of it I am sure they would not do such work as trashing cane.
5875. *By Mr. King*: Are you doing well out of cane growing? I cannot say it has paid me so luddy up till last year, but that year put a set ou me. If I had not had my own boys to help me I would not have done anything at all.
5876. *By Mr. Cowley*: How old are your boys? Fourteen and eleven.
5877. Then they are still under your control? Yes.
5878. *By Mr. King*: Do you think you can grow cane to pay, and employ only white labour? No; I do not think so.
5879. You are a German, are you not? I am a Dane.
5880. What part of Denmark do you come from? North Schleswig.
5881. Do they grow beet-root sugar there? A little for their own use, but not much.
5882. What are the wages of an agricultural labourer in your country? It is twenty years since I left home, but good wages were then about £10 a year and rations.
5883. What other crop could you raise to pay on, supposing the mills stopped? I do not know. I have tried to grow corn for a few years. I would manage to live at corn growing, but it is not a paying game any way. It is as delicate a crop as anything else. If the mills stopped there would be no sale for corn or sweet potatoes, or anything like that.
5884. You could live on the land, but you would not be able to get any money out of it? No.

H. C.
Christison.

14 Feb., 1889.

FRIDAY,

FRIDAY, 15 FEBRUARY, 1889.

MACKAY DISTRICT.

(At the Racecourse Central Mill.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.
A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

THOMAS PEARCE examined:

- T. Pearce. 5885. *By the Chairman*: You are a freeholder, living in this district? Yes.
 5886. And you are also Chairman of the Racecourse Central Sugar Company? Yes.
 5887. How many shareholders are there in the company? Twenty.
 5888. Upon what conditions was this central mill erected? It has been erected on behalf of the company through a loan obtained from the Government. The money was borrowed from the Government, to be repaid at the rate of 8 per cent. annually, the Government holding a mortgage over the whole of the properties. Then there was a lien or bill of encumbrance binding each settler to the condition of growing certain quantities of cane annually, for which he was to receive 8s. a ton. Then the conditions go on to explain that if at the end of the season, when all expenses and the Government interest had been paid, there was any surplus remaining it was to be either equally divided in proportion to the quantity of cane delivered, or the profits could be carried to a reserve fund. The conditions are like those of any other company.
 5889. *By Mr. King*: Was it not one of the conditions that black labour was not to be employed? Yes; the 9th clause says, "That I will employ labourers of European extraction and none others in and about the cultivation, carting, and cutting of the cane." There is nothing in the articles of association as to black labour.
 5890. *By the Chairman*: When were you to commence paying interest? I think it commenced last June.
 5891. Was the mill erected and ready for last crushing? It was ready for the last season.
 5892. And was there any cane presented for crushing? Two of the directors and two shareholders inspected the whole of the estates of the shareholders and brought up a report. While there were one or two shareholders desirous of working the mill, our engineer told us we should only do so by sustaining a loss of £200 or £300. Some few shareholders viewed it in the same light, and consequently we allowed them to sell their cane elsewhere. Of course there are minutes of these things in our minute book.
 5893. Interest is due to the Government from the 1st June last? We believe now it is due from January, 1888.
 5894. Of course that has not been paid? No; for reasons we explained to the Government. Of course there was no crushing, and it would involve us in a terrible loss.
 5895. Are any hands employed in connection with the company now? The secretary only.
 5896. What salary does he receive? £130 a year.
 5897. How is he being paid now? He is paid all that is due.
 5898. *By Mr. Cowley*: Out of capital? Yes; of course.
 5899. What are the prospects now for the next season's crushing? The season has been such, that I may say there is very little prospect of a crushing unless we buy cane. Our articles of association enable us to buy cane.
 5900. Is it not one of the conditions on which the money was advanced, that each shareholder binds himself to grow a certain number of acres of cane himself? Yes.
 5901. Has that been fulfilled? Yes; so far as it was possible. We had the area of cane in but we made no sugar.
 5902. Then the crushing next season will fall short again in consequence of the drought? Yes. There has been land ploughed on our ground; but we have never been able to plant it.
 5903. Has the condition of employing nothing but European labour been adhered to? Yes; strictly. It was reported that some shareholders were employing black labour, but we searched and found no evidence.
 5904. You are aware that reports have been circulated that black labour has been employed? Yes; and we sent a notice to all shareholders calling their attention to that.
 5905. What did your mill cost you originally? The original cost in Glasgow was £9,897.
 5906. What has been the total cost, including erection and buildings, as it now stands on the ground? I think about £19,000.
 5907. What is your opinion of the ultimate success of this central mill system? My opinion is that it will be a complete success, but of course they think that I am an enthusiast; but from lots of evidence I can gather, and from Mr. Hodgkinson's evidence, settlers can grow from 10 to 30 acres of cane. The unfortunate thing here is that settlers are not within any means of conveyance. You must be aware that cane, which is a very large and heavy crop, is heavy to cart, and if the settlers are ten miles from the mill they might as well be a thousand. I will illustrate what I mean. I saw a report from England some time ago to the effect that the sugar company establishing a tramway had been the means of 1000 acres of cane being cultivated. Now the same thing would apply here. Of course I may state that since this mill was erected, and there were doubts as to getting cane, we applied to the Government to know whether they would allow us to buy trucks of the same gauge as the railway and utilise the railway. The Government were quite agreeable, but unfortunately there has been no cane grown. We want further to get a branch line towards Barber's Creek. There is a lot of good land there. The secretary grew cane there four years ago and produced 50 tons to the acre, and the Mariani will could not take it off. It was loss of time and loss of money, and hence the place was abandoned. If there were tramroads or railroads to bring the produce, there would be no difficulty in producing cane. How some of the settlers

are

are living I do not know. I have even heard that some of them have to hunt kangaroos for food, but so long as they are isolated so long must they live in poverty. It is perfectly useless to settle on the soil unless there is some means of conveyance provided, applicable to the district. It costs 30s. a ton to bring maize into town, and the settler has to stop over night when he goes into town. I see no hope for the district unless we have an extension of tramroads or railroads. When they are provided I believe the sugar industry will be in a very different state in this district.

T. Peirce.
15 Feb. 1890.

5908. Are you a sugar grower yourself? Yes.

5909. How many years experience have you had? Only one year.

5910. Had you any previous experience? No.

5911. You are not acquainted with the practical details of sugar growing? No.

5912. You would not like to hazard a practical opinion on its working? No; I think that would be presumption.

5913. How long have you resided in this district? Twenty years.

5914. Is the climate suitable to the health of Europeans? I am sixty-four, and can jump a fence yet.

5915. Do you think sugar growing can be carried on in this district by Europeans? Only to a limited extent. There are settlers who can grow from 10 to 30 acres. Beyond that I do not think they could go.

5916. For what reason? Simply that it does not pay them to employ white labour. Neither do I think that large estates can be carried on by white labour.

5917. Do you think that 8s. a ton delivered at the central mill is a payable price for sugar cane? No, I do not.

5918. And yet the directors could not afford to give any more? The directors and shareholders had no experience of mills. They had sufficient experience to justify them in believing that there was a better margin, and that they would get it in the crushing. They put down the cost of cultivation at 8s. Supposing you grow 20 tons to the acre, that would be £8 an acre, and that would cover the cost of labour.

5919. At the time you entered into the arrangement with the Government which led to the erection of the central mill had the shareholders a reasonable prospect of growing the cane which they promised and undertook to do? They had.

5920. Have the circumstances of the district changed since that condition was signed? I do not think so, with the exception of the adverse seasons.

5921. Then you put down the non-success entirely to the drought? I do.

5922. And is the drought also the cause of the selectors having been so unfortunate as to have to hunt kangaroos for food? It is.

5923. Would any man in such a position be able to do the work that many a kanaka is doing now? Of course white men can do the work, but whether white labour is as cheap as black is another question. I believe that white men can do the work.

5924. In preference to living on kangaroos? I am certain of that.

5925. Is it your opinion that the planter prefers the kanaka to the European on the grounds of cheapness? Not altogether. White men are not reliable; there is no doubt of that. They are very apt at the time you most require them to take offence and demand their money. If they stop on they are offensive and lazy, and hence they are not what we call reliable. Therefore the settler who does his own work is safe, but if he goes beyond that it is a question whether he can make a success of cane growing with white labour only.

5926. You said just now that you had no experience, and therefore you can only speak from hearsay? I am speaking only from hearsay.

5927. *By Mr. King:* Have you employed white men at weeding or trashing? Never in trashing but I have in weeding and planting. The white men will contract for me all the year round.

5928. Are you aware what is the cost of cutting and delivering cane? It depends on the distance, I think our scale is: if a man is within one mile he has to deliver his cane free, and if within one and a half miles he gets 4d., for every half-mile up to five miles. That would be 2s. 8d. for four miles and the general payment for cutting is about 2s. 3d.

5929. Cutting and loading would be 2s. 6d.? Yes.

5930. If you allowed an extra 6d. for cartage that would come to 3s. for cutting and delivering the cane? Quite that.

5931. That would only leave 5s. for the growth of the cane? Yes.

5932. Do you consider that cane can be grown for 5s. a ton? No.

5933. You are authorised to buy cane—are you authorised to give a higher price than 8s. a ton? There is no restriction.

5934. Would it not dissatisfy your shareholders if you gave a higher price to outsiders than they get themselves? No; because if we derive a profit they participate.

5935. Are you authorised to buy cane grown by black labour? There is no restriction, because the growers do not participate in the profits.

5936. What amount of money have you received from the Government, altogether? £21,000.

5937. You have some £2,000 in hand? More or less.

5938. Do you expect to have sufficient inducement to crush this year? Yes; we do expect that inasmuch as we have submitted an offer for a large quantity of cane, but we have not yet had a reply. That would attach more settlers to the estate, and if we are successful, we anticipate that we shall crush 6,000 or 7,000 tons. That would give us a very fair season's work.

5939. If you were confined to your own shareholders' cane, what would happen? I do not think we should crush.

5940. The shareholders have suffered severely through the drought? Very severely; they could not suffer more.

5941. Are the majority of them now in the position to grow the cane which they guaranteed to grow? I do not know anything to the contrary. I have no information to warrant me in saying they are not in a position. Of course the strain which has been upon these people is very considerable. The sugar industry was very depressed, and that was the origin of this mill. Out of twenty settlers in this company only three are involved, and of these one owes £30 and another £50. That speaks very fairly for the settlers.

5942. I have

- T. Pearce. 5942. I have heard it said that owing to the bad season and delays in crushing at this mill the majority of the shareholders have exhausted their resources and run into debt, and are not in a position to cultivate the cane which they have guaranteed, is that correct? I do not think so. I could name a good many that I know are not in difficulties.
5943. *By the Chairman:* You have a personal knowledge of them? Yes.
5944. *By Mr. King:* To keep this mill working to its full capacity you would require to have 2,000 acres of land under cultivation? I do not think so. The estimate of this mill is a ton an hour.
5945. Fifteen hundred tons a season? They say that is possible, but working night and day it might make 2,000 tons. The average yield of sugar per acre of cane has been $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons.
5946. If you were to try to work up to 1,500 tons of sugar in the season you would require to have at least 2,000 acres under cultivation? Yes; I will admit that.
5947. That would mean that each of the twenty shareholders should cultivate 100 acres of cane to keep the mill fully working? But why should our mill require such an enormous amount while other large mills obtain only half the quantity?
5948. If you want to get the greatest amount of profit you must work your mill up to its full capacity? It is desirable, and when the cane is here no doubt we should. If we had the tramways there would be no doubt about getting the quantity of cane.
5949. How many acres do you consider one settler and his family can cultivate? An agriculturist could cultivate his twenty acres without any difficulty.
5950. How many acres of cane have you had? Only fourteen. The weather was so dry I could not plant any more.
5951. How much labour have you employed on that fourteen acres? I only had one man and his wife and son to clean the cane.
5952. Did the woman work in the field? I do not know. She might for all I know. She is quite capable.
5953. What age was the boy? Fourteen or fifteen or sixteen. I had them for planting cane. At that time you want every assistance.
5954. What business have you been carrying on since you have been settled in Mackay? Storekeeping generally.
5955. *By Mr. Cowley:* Can you give us the number of acres of cane the twenty shareholders are now growing? Two hundred and forty acres of cane when they decided not to crush.
5956. That is an average of twelve acres each? Yes.
5957. Do the Government require the 8 per cent. interest to be paid in advance? Yes.
5958. You say you are paying your shareholders 8s. per ton delivered, what are you offering to other growers? This year we have offered as high as 14s.
5959. Do you make any difference between plant cane and ratoons? 1s. a ton in favour of plant cane.
5960. Is 14s. the average price? No; 14s. is the highest, and 13s. the lowest.
5961. Do you know for a positive fact that the whole of the twenty shareholders have not employed a single black man? Not to my knowledge. It came to our ears that there was a man doing it, but we could not learn if he was absolutely doing it.
5962. Do they employ black labour outside of cane cultivation? Not that I am aware of, but there is nothing in our encumbrances that would forbid them doing it.
5963. Do you consider that it is binding morally, if not legally, not to cultivate with black labour? Yes; according to the encumbrance.
5964. You have not paid any interest to date? No.
5965. Have you any prospect of paying it for the next year? We have money in hand to pay it. If we buy cane we could pay it.
5966. But no prospect unless you purchase cane? I think not; arising from the fact that the dry weather has prevented anything from being done.
5967. Is this £19,000 the total amount of your indebtedness? £21,000.
5968. But the £19,000 expended—does that include interest still owing, or is it exclusive of interest? Exclusive. We will owe £22,000 odd at that rate.
5969. What would be the amount of interest owing on this £19,000? About £1,500.
5970. That would leave you £500 with which to commence operations next season, less the amount that you have to pay for the Secretary's salary? Yes.
5971. You say there are a great many settlers without means of conveyance—does that not apply also to those who sell to other central factories? Yes; it applies to all. There are hundreds of settlers in the same position. The same difficulty applies all round; on the north side more particularly.
5972. It is your opinion that the settlers can grow from 10 to 20 acres of cane, but not more? I do not think so.
5973. That would be the limit for one man? For one man.
5974. Do you think that, taking the average seasons, a man can make a good living for his wife and family from ten acres of cane? I do.
5975. At 8s. a ton? A settler can get 14s. He can get 15s. 6d. at the present time. I could give the name of the planter who offers 15s. 6d. a ton.
5976. I am speaking of your shareholders who have to deliver to your mill at 8s. a ton. You are of opinion that they can make a living at 8s. a ton? That was offered as a mere advance on the cost of growing. We sent round to the various settlers to know what would be the probable cost of growing cane, and the prices varied from £4 10s. to £21 an acre. We found that a fair average was from £7 to £8 an acre. That is why the price was nominally fixed at 8s. a ton.
5977. Really they are getting 8s. a ton for their cane? Yes.
5978. You are of opinion that 8s. a ton would not pay them? If they had no consideration beyond that, certainly not.
5979. You say that one man can grow twenty acres of cane—how many times do you plough the land before planting it? Here they plough it twice and harrow it twice. My opinion is based on what are stated as facts by practical men. The man who said it would cost £21 to grow an acre of cane has had to work for other people; the man who gave £4 10s. as the price is a large settler and prosperous.

5980. The land will take two ploughings and two harrowings. How many times will it have to be weeded with the horse-hoe? We have to weed as often as the weeds grow. Old ground is full of weeds, and new ground is not.
5981. Then the cane has also to be cut into lengths for planting, and to be carted and placed in the holes and covered up, and then there is the hand weeding and trashing. Do you really honestly think that one man can do all that in twelve months and cultivate twenty acres? I know it has been done. I believe a man can do that work if he is an agriculturist.
5982. *By the Chairman:* You say you know of your own knowledge that it has been done? Yes.
5983. Are your shareholders still of opinion that there will be sufficient profit to reimburse them and pay interest to Government, and buy the cane at 8s. a ton? Yes; I have heard nothing to the contrary.
5984. You think there will be sufficient profit to compensate them for growing at 8s. per ton? When we have a fair season. I can tell you that 15s. 6d. a ton is offered. Our company did not deem it prudent to offer more than 14s. I am informed that ten tons of cane will make a ton of sugar. I am credibly informed that £3 10s. will cover the cost of making a ton of sugar, including everything—working expenses and interest. Sugar at present is £16 a ton all round. If we can make it for £10 10s. and get £16, that leaves £5 10s. as net profit. I have no practical experience in the making of sugar, but that has been laid before experts, and they have never contradicted it. I asked a banker once why such a low price was paid for cane, and he said because the planter had it all his own way.
5985. *By Mr. Cowley:* Considering that the planter has paid such a low price, do you know of any planter who has made money? No; that is a matter I could not enter into. Three years ago the largest estate in this district would not give 6d. a ton, but as soon as the central mill was erected they offered 11s. in the field.
5986. *By Mr. King:* Can you mention any mill that is paying 11s. a ton in the field at the present time? Yes; Homebush.
5987. *By Mr. Cowley:* That is hearsay? I got it from the settler himself.
5988. Is it your intention to buy cane grown by black labour if you can get it? We should not object to it. It is not particularly our intention.
5989. Then it is your intention? Yes; if we can get it.
5990. Have your mortgages to the Government been completed? Yes.
5991. The shareholders? The shareholders have nothing to do with the Government. The individual shareholder is encumbered to the company, and the company is encumbered to the Government.
5992. All these mortgages have been completed and are registered? Yes.
5993. Do you think your mill is in a complete state and fit to take off one ton of sugar per hour? I am assured so. There are a few things to be done.
5994. Are the clarifiers, coolers, and centrifugals complete? Everything is ready to make a ton of sugar a day.
5995. As chairman of directors, and being conversant with all the shareholders, do you know whether they are still satisfied with the condition that they are not to grow cane with black labour? No; I will tell you straight. There are several of our shareholders who say "we cannot continue to do this with any degree of success with white labour only."
5996. *By Mr. King:* You say that sugar can be manufactured for £3 10s. a ton? I am told so.
5997. The interest is £1,500 a year; if you make 1,500 tons a year there would be £1 a ton for interest alone? Yes.
5998. Bags are 4d. a piece and thirty-two go to the ton; that is 10s. 8d. for bags? I must tell you that I only repeat what I am told.
5999. That is £1 10s. 8d. for interest and bags alone? They reckon £3 10s. would produce a ton of sugar.
6000. I see by your balance sheet that the company has made advances to settlers who are growing cane? Yes.
6001. At what rate per acre have you advanced? Some advances are on the land. To one settler we made an advance of £3 an acre.
6002. What settler was that? Ross.
6003. Had he eighteen acres? He had sixteen acres growing, but the season has been so bad that it failed.
6004. This man then has got a dead horse to work out? We hold the deeds of the property.
6005. *By the Chairman:* You said just now you were a storekeeper? Yes.
6006. In the course of your business transactions have the selectors complained to you of the very low price offered for the cane? Some years ago. That was the origin of the central mill system. It was in consequence of these continual complaints that something had to be done. I saw the same evil in other countries. I propounded a scheme, and out of that Sir Samuel Griffith brought forward the central mill system.
6007. What price was offered then? Six shillings; but Mr. Long, who has always been very liberal, has always given 11s. to 13s. a ton.
6008. Then the establishment of the central mills has been the means of giving a fair price to the grower for his cane which he could not get before? Yes; that is so.
6009. They have been a substantial boon to the district in that respect alone? Yes; and every settler will bear testimony to that.
6010. Does the soil of the district show signs of exhaustion by over-production? They say so; but practical men, who thoroughly understand the business say "No." They say it is the inferior management which is the cause of the depression—that boys who have been brought here have been employed as personal servants instead of in the field.
6011. Do you know of your own knowledge that these boys are employed in other capacities than in sugar growing? In times past they were.
6012. *By Mr. King:* You said just now that you had heard complaints from growers about not getting a sufficient price for their cane? Yes; repeatedly.
6013. As a storekeeper have you never heard complaints from most growers that produce dealers do not give a fair price? Yes.

T. Pearce.
15 Feb., 1889.

- T. Pearce. 6014. And the same complaint is made by fruit growers? Yes; no doubt.
6015. In fact producers all round complain that the men who purchase from them do not give enough for the produce? Yes, but sugar cane is an exception. If a man cannot get his cane crushed, he cannot go to another market. No cane grower could send to Brisbane or Sydney. It is a different thing altogether, especially when you have been induced to grow, and then sustain a loss.
6016. Do not the cane growers generally have an agreement? Yes, but it is not worth the paper it is written on. I think Mr. Denman gave you some information on that point.
6017. You are aware that an agreement can be enforced at law? But how can you go to law. The man you deal with is either the manager or nominal owner. You have to deal with the banks. Everyone in the district has enough to do to make the two ends meet without going to law. I do not know more than two men in the district who are making money—Mr. Long and Mr. Hyne. Those are practical men. They understand their business and make it pay. Mr. Long makes it pay, because his manager was getting £500 a year, with one-half per cent on all profits. His time had not expired, and they quarrelled. He sued Mr. Long and got a verdict for £500.
6018. *By Mr. Cowley*: Was that for wrongful dismissal? No, for profits, and Mr. Long's arbitrator awarded the manager that amount.
6019. It appears that a manager can enforce an agreement, why could not a cane grower? Many of the settlers could not.
6020. *By the Chairman*: Do you know of cases in which agreements have been entered into with settlers extending over a number of years, and the mills have closed and thrown the selectors on their beam ends? I cannot say that I do, but frequently agreements have been refused altogether. The settlers have had to take the word of the manager. Mr. Ross, of this district, was planting cane on his selection when Mr. Hyne came by and asked him who he was planting for. He said, "For you." Mr. Hyne said, "I am not going to crush it." Then, when it was ready, he asked Mr. Hyne if he would crush it, and Mr. Hyne abused him because he did not grow more. I do not say that Mr. Hyne was wrong, but that does not suit the settler.
6021. Cases have occurred in which a change in the management has taken place, and the new manager has repudiated the agreement? Yes; I have heard of that. The case of Mr. James, who grew for Farleigh. The agreement was good enough.
6022. The central mills have cured that in this district? Yes.
6023. *By Mr. Cowley*: Is it your experience, or is it simply hearsay evidence, that induces you to say that the planters as a rule are not to be trusted, and that their word is not to be taken? I would not say that. The planters have gone in for very sharp practice, but if a man is buying goods he buys as cheap as he can.
6024. But I am speaking of repudiation of agreements? I am not making sweeping assertions about the whole of the planters, because I have the highest respect for them. I may take Mr. Davidson, who I highly respect, but I say he is totally unfit for sugar growing. He is of the planter class. They cannot live here. If I want sugar and go to Mr. Davidson, he says "Go to my agent." If I go to Mr. Hyne he treats me properly. The result is that the agents have made money, while the planters have lost it.
6025. You would not like a planter to hawk his goods round? I would sell to anyone.
6026. Do you propose applying to Government for assistance to build a tramway? We have money reserved for that, but we must see the Government first.
6027. But you have only £500 available, and that will not build a tramway? No; but we may induce the Government to give us a little time.
6028. How many miles of tramway would it take to bring in the cane? About five miles.
6029. How much extra cane will that give you? It will make available an almost unlimited quantity of land. There would be 300 acres grown if there were means of bringing in the cane.
6030. You say that four years ago there were complaints about the low price offered to the growers. Is it not a fact that four years ago 10s. a ton in the field was being offered? I am not aware of it.
6031. That is 2s. a ton more than you offer for the cane delivered? We cannot regard that as an absolute purchase. It is an arrangement.
6032. Still if there are no profits that is all the men will get? I grant you that.
6033. You say there would be no more grown by the settlers if it was not for the central mills. Is it not a fact that numbers of settlers grew cane before the establishment of these central mills? The only place that I know of is on Mr. Long's estate. At Eton they abandoned it, but of course if you have had a crop of cane in for two or three years you cannot abandon it all at once.
6034. Is it not a fact there was more cane grown before the central factories were established than there is now? I can tell you another circumstance. When we had something like 7,000 kanakas and 4,000 whites in the district, previous to 1883, the highest quantity of sugar made in one year was 14,000 tons. Since that period 25,000 tons have been made.
6035. *By Mr. King*: In one season? Yes; when the labour could not be procured.
6036. *By the Chairman*: Did Mr. Hodgkinson hold meetings of selectors in this district? Yes.
6037. Were you present at the meetings? I was not present at all of them.
6038. Were you present at Eton? No; I was not at Eton.
6039. Were you at Abingdon? I was there. I was not present at any particular meeting of the shareholders with Mr. Hodgkinson.
6040. Do you not know that Mr. MacKenzie offered to sell his mill to the Eton Sugar Mill Company for £20,000? I do not. Mr. Hodgkinson recommended that we should purchase Mr. Hyne's mill, but the shareholders were unanimous in refusing it.
6041. *By Mr. Cowley*: Was there any land to go with the mill? Forty acres.
6042. How much land have you in connection with this company? Fourteen acres.
6043. *By the Chairman*: Were you present at the meeting of Racecourse shareholders when it was definitely decided to apply to the Government for money for a central mill? I think so.
6044. Did you ever hear of an offer being made by W. Hyne and Co.? Yes; to sell the whole of their plant and forty acres for £18,000. One person drew out of the company because they did not purchase it.
6045. Mr. Hyne offered to lease out the whole of his land, over 700 acres, in forty acre blocks, to farmers to grow cane? I am not sure of that.
6046. You heard his proposals read? I have read them. The general opinion was that Mr. Hyne was likely to erect another mill.

CHARLES

CHARLES KEMP examined :

C. Kemp.

6047. *By the Chairman* : You have a farm on the Nebo road? Yes.
6048. And you are a shareholder in the Racecourse Central Mill Company? Yes.
6049. How many acres have you now under cane? At present only about sixteen acres on account of the drought.
6050. How many acres did you undertake to grow when you signed the conditions? I intended to grow fifty or sixty acres yearly, but I have been unable to do anything much. I have had twenty-five acres under cultivation and it has been a failure.
6051. What sort of a crop have you growing now? It is a medium crop.
6052. Will it be a half crop? It might be.
6053. What will be the yield of cane per acre? From what I can see it would be difficult to estimate it, but the yield might average about ten tons.
6054. How long have you been growing cane? For myself I have been growing it for the last sixteen years.
6055. What have you done with it? I have sold it sometimes to Mr. Davidson and sometimes to Mr. Walker. I sold it to the River estate one season and two seasons to Mr. Hyne.
6056. What have you got per ton for it? I sold some at £16 10s. an acre eight years ago.
6057. Did you ever have any difficulty in disposing of your cane? Not in those years, but during the last year or two we have had a little difficulty in doing so, and have received nothing like fair value for it.
6058. *By Mr. King* : What is the lowest price you ever got for your cane from the planters? The lowest price was 6s. per 100 gallons of juice. A ton of cane is supposed to produce an average of 120 gallons of juice.
6059. That would be very nearly 8s. a ton? Yes.
6060. Did the planter cut and cart it? Yes; that was the lowest price I ever got.
6061. Did that pay you? No.
6062. Will it pay you to deliver your cane here for 8s.? No, I am sure it will not.
6063. How do you expect to carry on? Well, the inducement we had for entering the company and growing cane for 8s. a ton was that we would share in the profits. I know myself that the cane can be manufactured in this mill at an average of £3 a ton, and I considered that instead of receiving only 8s. a ton, if we could get 800 or 900 tons to crush annually, I should receive 17s. a ton.
6064. Are you aware that if this mill made 750 tons of sugar a year the interest would amount to £2 a ton, and the bags would cost 10s. 8d. a ton, and with fire wood at 9s. a cord, that would bring it up to £3 a ton without paying any wages or freight whatever? If you put the interest on, it will amount to that.
6065. Supposing that next season is a bad season and there is no profit and that the mill only makes 400 tons, will the shareholders be able to go on? No; the only thing we can do is to hand over whatever money there is belonging to the Government and hand over the mill.
6066. If you had to go on for two or three years only getting 8s. a ton, would you be able to carry on? No; I would not. One year would stop me. I have no capital to spend. In fact I have already lost the capital I had in growing cane.
6067. What is the area of your selection? I have only twenty acres of my own, but I have forty acres rented.
6068. What rent do you pay for your forty acres? £1 and 15s., and for some I had a few years ago I paid £2 an acre. I would just as soon have to pay £2 an acre as get it for nothing. I could live on it when I paid £2 an acre, but times are so bad now that if I could get it for nothing I could not make it pay.
6069. *By the Chairman* : How does your name come to appear in Mr. Hodgkinson's report as the holder of a sixty-acre freehold? Sixty acres I was cultivating, but not as a freehold.
6070. Your name appears in Mr. Hodgkinson's report? I had the crop but not the freehold.
6071. The number of acres you agreed to cultivate were twenty? Yes, that is correct; but I was not a freeholder.
6072. Then the statement in this report is not correct? No.
6073. *By Mr. Cowley* : When you sold cane juice for 6s. a hundred gallons how many gallons did you get per acre? I never kept an account of that. Two years ago a crop realised me £2 10s. an acre.
6074. What mill did you sell it to? Tekowai.
6075. Was that a double crushing mill? Yes. That was the first season they had double crushing power.
6076. What assistance have you in cultivating these sixteen acres? I have two grown-up sons, and we do the work amongst us.
6077. It is a family affair? Yes; and we have a store also.
6078. Are you willing to grow and capable of growing cane for this mill at 8s. a ton with white labour? I am willing, and will do my utmost. I will give it a fair trial, as I promised; but if I do not receive more than 8s. a ton I will have to give it up. I will go on and see if there is any difference made. I am perfectly well aware that unless we can get 1,000 tons of sugar through the mill it will not pay us.
6079. When you paid £2 an acre for your land you made it pay—you sold your cane to the planters then? Yes.
6080. And you made it pay at that time? Yes; for a few years very well. I was quite satisfied.

HERBERT JOSLING examined :

H. Josling.

6081. *By the Chairman* : You are a shareholder and director in the Racecourse Central Sugar Company? Yes.
6082. You were present at the meetings held in this district when Mr. Hodgkinson was here? Yes.
6083. You are the proprietor of eighty acres of ground? At that time I was.
6084. You have a reduced area now? Yes.
6085. You undertook on that occasion to cultivate forty or fifty acres of cane? Yes.
6086. Are you carrying out your part of the contract? Yes; as far as I can.
6087. And solely with white labour? Yes.
6088. Did you grow cane last year? Yes.

15 Feb., 1889.

6089. Why

- H. Josling. 6089. Why was it not crushed at the mill? They could not get sufficient cane to make a start.
 6090. Then you sold it to some other mill? Yes; to Meadowlands.
 15 Feb., 1889. 6091. What did you get per ton for it? 9s.
 6092. Did you deliver it at that price? No; they took it. The price was 9s. for plant cane, and 8s. for ratoons.
 6093. How many tons did you sell? 170 tons.
 6094. You have still got the same quantity of land you agreed to cultivate under cane? Yes. I have the ratoons from the plant cane I put in first.
 6095. How long have you been residing in this district? Twenty-four years.
 6096. Is it a generally healthy district for Europeans? Yes.
 6097. Is it sufficiently healthy for Europeans to carry on the cultivation of sugar cane? No; not as labourers.
 6098. You are carrying on your own cultivation with white labour? Yes; since I joined the central mill. Before that I had all sorts of labour.
 6099. Is it your opinion that the cultivation of cane in this district can be carried on successfully with white labour? I have come to the conclusion that it can not. My experience tells me not, with bad seasons and the labour not suitable. If we had the proper seasons white labour would be less suitable. For the last four years we have had no sugar weather. There are four mouths of the year when it is impossible for a working man to do the work. He will not do it except to get enough to eat, or to get a rise and get away.
 6100. Under the circumstances, you will carry out your contract with the Government? I must as long as I can, but if we get another season like this our money and credit will be exhausted.
 6101. When the arrangement was made two years ago things looked a little more prosperous than they do now? Yes; we thought the Government were going to send plenty of labour here—Scandinavian labour, or something of that sort; but if I want a white man now I have to pay him 25s. a week. I paid a man 30s. a week for hoeing last year, and I could get a man to drive a dray for 15s.
 6102. By Mr. King: How many acres do you expect to have fit for crushing this year? Twenty-six.
 6103. Is there promise of a fair crop? No.
 6104. Do you think it will pay you to grow cane for 8s. a ton? No; not at all. That is one of the things that will have to be altered here.
 6105. There have been several bad seasons since this agreement was made with the Government? They have been all bad.
 6106. From your own knowledge of the condition of the shareholders, do you think they will be able to carry out their agreements? I do not think so. In fact, I am positive they will not.
 6107. They have not got the means to cultivate the area of ground they originally agreed to do? I know I have not, and there are others worse off than I am.
 6108. By the Chairman: How long have you had your land under cultivation? Some of it has been under cultivation for ten years.
 6109. Have you manured it? No.
 6110. Does the soil show any indication of exhaustion? Not at all.
 6111. By Mr. Cowley: You have reduced your area since you had that meeting with Mr. Hodgkinson—how many acres of freehold do you own now? Forty-five acres.
 6112. How long have you been growing cane? Fifteen years.
 6113. Did you sell to the mills previously? Yes.
 6114. What did you get before last year for your cane? 9s. and 10s. standing in the field.
 6115. Unless you get a profit from the working of this mill you will have to give up growing—unless you get a profit over and above the 8s.? Yes.
 6116. In a good season, when you get thunderstorms and hot weather, would it pay you to grow cane with white labour at 8s. a ton? No.
 6117. Not in the best season? Not in the best season, with white labour.
 6118. You are close to the mill? Thirty chains away from the mill. I rent ground as well.
 6119. It would not pay you to grow cane at 8s. a ton with white labour? No; I find white labour is no use when you actually want it.
 6120. By the Chairman: Have you grown anything but sugar? I tried to grow rice.
 6121. Has that been a success? No; there was no rain and it died.

WILLIAM LANDELLS examined:

- W. Landells. 6122. By the Chairman: You are one of the directors of the Racecourse Central Sugar Mill Company? Yes.
 15 Feb., 1889. 6123. You were present at the meeting held by Mr. Hodgkinson when you agreed to establish the mill? No; I was not present.
 6124. You subsequently signed the conditions? I did.
 6125. You were then represented to be the owner of forty acres of land? Twenty-eight freehold and forty leasehold.
 6126. You undertook to cultivate from forty to fifty acres of cane? Yes; up to sixty acres.
 6127. Have you carried out that condition? Not completely.
 6128. How many acres have you regularly cultivated? I had five acres of ratoons and I planted twenty acres of cane.
 6129. Did you get any cane last year? Yes; but unfortunately we had such a bad season that I ploughed out eleven acres and put in four acres of rice. It came on splendidly, but we had no rain and it died out. I only cut four acres of plant cane and four acres of ratoons.
 6130. You disposed of that? Yes; to W. Hynes and Co.
 6131. How many acres have you got under cane for this year? Five acres stand-over and five acres of ratoons.
 6132. Are most of the shareholders in the same position as yourself? Yes; just the same.
 6133. You have no hope of being able to carry out the conditions? Not this season.
 6134. You undertook to grow cane with white labour? Yes.

6135. Has

6135. Has the labour been any difficulty with you? We cannot do with white labour. My expenses last year were £450, and the returns were £26 and some odd shillings. We cannot rely on white labour. We sent for some, and I had two new chums for three months. For the first six weeks they were very awkward, and at the first instalment of wages paid I could not afford them any longer. I told them if they did not like to stop I should be glad to get rid of them. I had two of my sons with me fortunately.
6136. When you signed the conditions with regard to growing cane for the mill things were more prosperous? Yes.
6137. And you had a hope of being able to carry out the conditions? Yes.
6138. You have now come to the conclusion that it is hopelessly impossible to do so? I cannot do it unless I get reliable labour. I draw your attention to the tremendous amount of hand work required. It would take about 5,000 plants to plant an acre of cane. These plants have to be handled four times; cut, put in the cart, buried, and planted. That represents about 26,000 plants for one acre. Then the hoeing, trashing, and weeding has to be done by hand. If we enjoyed the same privileges that you have on the Downs we would be all right; the machine comes on the land and sows it, and the same machine comes and reaps the crop. Here the whole thing has to be done by hand. Then the weeding comes on. The two men I had last year said that they could not stand it. They got headache and backache. I am an old stager, and have been engaged in tropical agriculture for twenty years, and I cannot stand that work. In 1887 when I started hoeing my nose began to bleed. The reliability of labour is really the question, and not the cheapness of labour. If a gold rush took place in the middle of harvesting our men would not stop.
6139. You know the names of your brother shareholders? I know every one of them personally.
6140. And you are able to assure us that most of the farmers who signed the conditions are in exactly the same position as yourself, and if they were asked to sign the conditions now they would not? They would not.
6141. Would you do so? I would not.

W. Landells.
15 Feb., 1889.

MONDAY, 18 FEBRUARY, 1889.

MACKAY DISTRICT.

(At Mackay.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.
A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

GEORGE IRONSIDES examined:

6142. *By the Chairman*: Are you a selector in this district? Yes; and Chairman of directors of the North Eton Sugar Company.
6143. And you are one of the guarantors to the Government for the erection of the North Eton Central Mill? Yes.
6144. Were you present at the meeting which Mr. Hodgkinson held in this district when the farmers agreed to the conditions on which the Government undertook the erection of the mill? I was.
6145. And you were one of those who undertook to grow cane entirely by white labour? Yes; I was.
6146. How long have you been a resident in this district? About eighteen years.
6147. How long have you been growing sugar cane? The most of that time. I have been about fourteen years growing sugar cane.
6148. How many acres are comprised in your selections? Between 1,100 and 1,200 acres.
6149. And how many acres have you had under sugar cane? 200 acres.
6150. What was the average yield of cane per acre during the time that you have been growing it? That is a very hard question to answer. Sometimes you will have a good crop, and sometimes you will have a bad one.
6151. But I am asking you to state an average, you may take one or two or three years; just give us some idea of the yield per acre? I think that taking it all through the yield would be 20 tons to the acre.
6152. Some years it has been more, and some years it has been less? Yes; last year, for instance, the crop was very small; but that is the only time I have had a bad crop.
6153. And to whom did you sell your cane? To various parties. To the Victoria mill, the Marian mill, and Homebush.
6154. What price did you get for it? Various prices; 10s. is the highest that ever I got; 7s. 6d. and 5s. was the lowest. That is for cane standing in the field.
6155. What labour did you employ in growing that cane? I had a few kanakas.
6156. Any white? Yes.
6157. And what was your reason for desiring the erection of a central mill? Well, my reason was that I would have had to give up growing cane unless there was something of that kind, because I could not get rid of my cane. I had just to take whatever price the planters liked to give me.
6158. In order that you might get a fair price for your cane you undertook to grow cane exclusively by white labour? Yes.
6159. How many acres have you under cane? 120 acres.
6160. And have you leased any of your land to others for the purpose of growing cane? I have.
6161. How many lessees have you on your land? Five.
6162. What are their areas? Fifty acres each.

G. Ironsides.
18 Feb., 1889.

6163. Are

- G. Ironsides. 6163. Are they single men or men with families? Some of them have families, and some are single men.
 6164. What rent do you get? I get none.
 18 Feb., 1889. 6165. On what terms is the land leased to them? On condition that they grow cane for the central mill.
 6166. Without any rent? Without any rent.
 6167. Is it a stipulation with them that they should not employ coloured labour? Yes.
 6168. From your experience of eighteen years in this district, are you of opinion that sugar cane can be grown with European labour? I am.
 6169. Profitably? A man can make a living out of it.
 6170. And you give that as your deliberate opinion? I do.
 6171. Do you think that the climate is suitable for the health of Europeans? Well, it has never hindered me from working; I have done all sorts of work in the field and never felt the worse for it.
 6172. Have you ever been employed trashing and weeding cane? I was, eighteen years ago.
 6173. And you never objected to it? No; never.
 6174. Were you doing that for wages or working for yourself? Working for myself.
 6175. How much cane was crushed at North Eton Mill last season? Something like 1,400 tons of sugar cane.
 6176. What quantity of sugar was obtained? 100 tons.
 6177. How was it that the quantity of cane was so small, when the estimate given to Mr. Hodgkinson of the probable crops of cane was so large? Well, it was a very bad crop. The area was there, but the cane was not there. There were acres with scarcely anything on them.
 6178. What was the cause of the failure? The dry weather.
 6179. Do you think that if the season had been at all favourable, the required quantity of cane would have been grown? It would.
 6180. What are the prospects of the central mill becoming a success? Good seasons and tramways to bring the cane in.
 6181. Have the board of directors gone into a calculation as to the amount of sugar it would be necessary to manufacture in order to pay working expenses and interest on the loan obtained from the Government? Yes.
 6182. How many tons of sugar have they estimated they would require to manufacture to pay interest and working expenses? From 1,200 to 1,500 tons.
 6183. Have you been called upon by the Government to pay the interest on the loan? We have not.
 6184. How long have you had the money? We have not had it all yet. There is a balance of £4,223 still in the hands of the Government.
 6185. Have any of the shareholders who signed the conditions altered their opinions since the conditions were signed? Well, they have given no notice to the company that they have done so. I have heard it talked about that they have, but I have never heard anything about it.
 6186. Any change of opinion has not been conveyed to you officially as chairman? No.
 6187. Nor to the Board of Directors? No.
 6188. Do you know if the area of land held by the shareholders now is the same as was held by them when they signed the conditions? Yes.
 6189. Is it freehold? The most of it.
 6190. They have not reduced their freehold area? No.
 6191. Could a shareholder dispose of his property without the board of directors knowing anything of it? No; he could not.
 6192. What has been the total cost of the mill up to the present? I could not exactly tell you the amount; about £20,000.
 6193. Have you ever formed an estimate of your working expenses for the year? Yes; we have gone into them.
 6194. What would it amount to? I cannot exactly tell you at present.
 6195. Could the secretary give us the information? I do not think he can. It has been gone into many a time.
 6196. And yet you cannot give us your estimate? I cannot. We know exactly what men we require and pretty nearly what the wages will amount to.
 6197. Have you not, as a board of directors, properly prepared an estimate showing what the whole of your working expenses and interest for the year are likely to be, and what amount of sugar you would require to produce in order to make it pay? Certainly; but I do not carry it in my head.
 6198. Would the secretary have any books from which he could give us the information? I do not think he has them here.
 6199. How many shareholders are there in the company? Twenty.
 6200. Has your company offered to buy cane from other growers who are not shareholders? Yes.
 6201. What did they offer per ton? Last year we gave 13s.
 6202. Were any questions asked as to whether it was grown by white or coloured labour? No.
 6203. Then you may have offered to purchase kanaka-grown cane at 13s. a ton? Well, yes.
 6204. While your shareholders growing cane with white labour only get 10s. a ton? Yes.
 6205. By Mr. King: Do your articles of association limit you to purchasing cane from the shareholders at 10s. a ton? No.
 6206. By the Chairman: Is that the minimum price? Yes.
 6207. Do you think that the twenty shareholders who signed the conditions are capable of growing sufficient cane to yield 1,500 tons of sugar? Yes; I do.
 6208. Do you think that if the seasons were favourable the shareholders will adhere to the conditions of their agreement? I think so.
 6209. By Mr. King: What is the amount of capital the Government have promised to advance to the company? £25,000.
 6210. And you have received £20,000? Yes.
 6211. Have you any outstanding liabilities? Yes.
 6212. How much? £4,223.

6213. Then

6213. Then the whole of the Government advance of £25,000 has been expended? Yes; when that sum has been paid. G. Ironsides.
18 Feb., 1889.
6214. Do you know when the Government will commence to charge you interest? I do not.
6215. Have you not received any notice from the Treasury? No.
6216. What number of employés do you now have engaged in connection with the North Eton Central Mill? Only the secretary and manager; two persons.
6217. At what salaries? The manager £300, and the secretary £100 a year.
6218. What price did you get for the sugar you made this year? About £14 per ton for first sugar.
6219. What were the expenses for working the mill this year? I could not tell you.
6220. What wages did the men you employed get? £1 a week.
6221. Each man? Yes.
6222. No more than that? No.
6223. You say that 1,400 tons of cane were crushed. How many tons were purchased from outside growers, and how many were contributed by the shareholders? Well, I cannot exactly tell you the amount. I think that something like 300 tons were purchased from outside, but I could not be sure.
6224. About 300 tons by outside growers and 1,100 tons by the shareholders? Yes.
6225. Can you say how many acres of the shareholders' cane were crushed this year? I could not. It was something like 500 acres, very nearly. It went about 2 tons to the acre, and plenty of it not that.
6226. What is the cost of cultivating an acre of cane? I do not know. It depends a good deal on how you work it.
6227. You have been engaged in cultivating cane and employing white labour to do so, what is the cost of doing so? I do not know. I do not need many hands to grow cane.
6228. Have you no idea from your accounts what is the cost, and what your expenses are? Yes; but I have kept a rather careless account. I have always made enough to clear my way and a little over, and never bothered my head about it.
6229. *By the Chairman*: Do you keep any books? No.
6230. *By Mr. King*: Are all the shareholders of the company in good circumstances? Pretty fair.
6231. Have they the means to cultivate their land? They have.
6232. You were talking about extending the tramways through adjoining land. Have you made any application to the Government for capital for this work? Yes; that was done some time ago.
6233. How much do you consider it would take to do this? We applied for £10,000; but if we had half of that amount we could go on.
6234. How many miles of permanent line would you put down? We were calculating on ten miles.
6235. Do you consider that ten miles could be put down for £5,000? Yes; but we could do with less.
6236. The whole of the capital the Government has guaranteed to advance has been expended? It has been expended.
6237. *By the Chairman*: Have you any lawsuit pending with anyone just now in connection with the mill? Yes.
6238. Who is it against? The liquidators of the Crystal Brook Sugar Company.
6239. What have they demanded from you? About £1,000 more than what they ought to do.
6240. Has the company been served with a writ? Yes.
6241. And are you defending the action? Yes.
6242. Have you offered them terms of settlement? Yes.
6243. Will you state what those terms are? There is only £250 now between us, and we have offered them what we owe them. It is £4,500 or something like that that they offer to take now, and the amount that we owe them is £4,223 or something like it.
6244. *By Mr. King*: Do you think that the action is likely to be settled for the amount you have offered them? I think so.
6245. Supposing that you go to law and win or lose the case, in what position would the company be? I don't know. I do not see that they can touch the company.
6246. Could the company pay the costs if you lose the case? I suppose we could pay it.
6247. Where would you get the money? I do not know. They have not got the money.
6248. How will you provide for the expenses of starting the work this year, unless the Government make some further advance? We can do it. We had to do it last year, and I think we can do it this.
6249. You say that you do not know what the working expenses will be this year? I do not know the exact amount.
6250. Can't you give it us in round numbers? No I cannot. It is all in the books, but I could not tell you what it is.
6251. Has the company had any difficulty with any of its shareholders? Well, yes, there have been some growls.
6252. Do any of the shareholders wish to withdraw? We have no formal notice of such a thing.
6253. Have any of the shareholders withdrawn their shares? No.
6254. Have they made application to do so? One did.
6255. Did the directors make the transfer? They did not.
6256. On what ground did they refuse? They did not think that the man to whom the property was to be transferred would have acted in the interests of the company.
6257. *By Mr. Cowley*: Can you give us any particulars of the total amount of your liability, showing the total amount of debt, including interest due to the Government? No; I cannot.
6258. Can you give us the gross amount that your sugar realised last year? I could not do so here.
6259. You cannot give us the gross amount paid for the cane? I cannot tell you.
6260. Can you tell us whether it is all paid for? It is all paid for.
6261. Are you offering to buy cane for next season from outside growers? We have made no offer yet.
6262. Is your mill thoroughly capable of taking off 1,500 tons? There are some little alterations that would have to be made to enable it to do so.
6263. Have you estimated the cost of those additions? We think they could be done for about £300.
6264. You say that you have made an application to the Government for more money for the purpose of constructing a tram line? Yes.
6265. What

- G. Ironsides. 6265. What security do you propose to give? Only the security that they have got. We have no other security to give for the additional £5,000.
- 18 Feb., 1889. 6266. But in fact you made an application for £10,000? Yes.
6267. And you had no additional security to give for it? No more than that we would guarantee that more cane would be supplied to the mill.
6268. How many additional acres of cane would those five miles of tramway give you? Something like 500 acres extra. All this has been sent down in writing to the Government.
6269. Has anyone leased their land to tenants besides you? Antony.
6270. Are those tenants growing cane exclusively with white labour, or are they employing coloured labour? They are. They are not employing coloured labour that I know of; that is those connected with the central mill.
6271. When you say that they get the land rent free, do they clear the land for you? Some of it is cleared and some of it is not cleared.
6272. You say that they have fifty acres each. How many do they cultivate of that? They have only commenced. This is the first year, and only one of them has any cane, and only three have done a little this year.
6273. What is the extent of the cane grown by them? Twenty acres between the three.
6274. Is there anything in the lease of those tenants compelling them to grow cane by white labour? Yes, they made exactly the same agreement that I have myself with the Government.
6275. Has the land of your shareholders been mortgaged to the Government? Yes.
6276. Have those mortgages been completed? Yes, and registered.
6277. Then it is not a fact that since they have mortgaged their land to the Government they have mortgaged it to outside parties? I have heard it said, but do not know whether it is a fact or not.
6278. Is it not your duty as chairman of the company to find those matters out? I did so. I made inquiries by writing to the Government to see if the deeds had been delivered.
6279. And you would have found out in that way if any of the shareholders had mortgaged their properties to outsiders? Yes.
6280. How many acres of cane can a white man plant, cultivate, cut, and cart to the mill himself? That is rather a difficult question to answer, because it is a job not fit for a man; that is to do all that work by himself.
6281. But how much could ten men do? They ought to do 100 acres, ten acres each.
6282. Have you ever known a man to do ten acres? I never have; but I would undertake to do ten acres.
6283. What wages would you pay a man who could do ten acres all round? £1 a week.
6284. How many horses would he require? Three.
6285. What implements? A plough, harrow, and scarifier.
6286. Was any of the cane purchased last season grown by kanaka labour? I do not know if it was.
6287. Not as chairman? Do you not know whether the persons you bought it from employed kanaka labour? I do not know whether they had kanakas or any other coloured labour.
6288. What do you estimate is the cost of manufacturing sugar after the cane is delivered? Well, we have scarcely had a fair trial, because we did not get half as much cane as we required, and we could have crushed twice as much with the same labor.
6289. What wages did you pay to your mill hands? We paid the men knocking about the mill £1 a week, the engine drivers 30s. a week, and £3 a week to the sugar boilers.
6290. What would be the number of men required to run the mill? About 45.
6291. That is including everything? Yes.
6292. By Mr. King: Is Mr. Antony a shareholder? He is.
6293. Is he a large shareholder in the company? Yes, he is a large shareholder.
6294. Can you say whether any of the shareholders in the company employ kanaka labour for anything else, besides the growing of cane? Do they employ kanaka labour at all? Not that I am aware of.
6295. You do not know if they are employing kanakas on any of their land in any capacity? I am sure they are not. A few men who had boys before they signed the agreement, kept them until their time was up; but since that there has been no coloured labor employed.
6296. With what bank have you been connected? The Queensland National Bank.
6297. Have you an overdraft? Yes.
6298. What security have you given the bank for your overdraft? The directors are personally responsible for the overdraft.
6299. Who has the deed of encumbrance? The Government.
6300. Who prepared it? The Government.
6301. Have you got a copy of it? I have not. It is in the articles of association.
6302. Has it come to your knowledge that deeds have been issued to the shareholders by the Government without the encumbrance being endorsed on them? It has. That is exactly what I am inquiring about, and about which I can get no satisfactory reply from the Government.
6303. By the Chairman: Have you put the matter properly before the Government? Yes.
6304. What reply have you received? No satisfactory reply.
6305. The issuing of these deeds has taken place within the last four or five months? Yes.
6306. Then in point of fact the company has no claim on those shareholders who have received their deeds from the Government without the encumbrance being endorsed on them? That is exactly what I want to know. We can get no satisfaction from the Government, and we intend to take steps in the matter.
6307. Do you employ a solicitor in connection with the company? Yes; and I am now trying to find out what deeds have been issued.
6308. And have you instructed him to lodge a caveat against their registration? Yes.
6309. Then the board has taken every care to properly protect the interests of the company? We have.
6310. By Mr. King: What is the amount of the company's overdraft at the present time? At present I think it is scarcely anything; we are about clear.
6311. By Mr. Cowley: How far is the land on which you grow the cane from the central mill? The farthest away is about a mile.

6312. When

6312. When you said that ten white men could cultivate 100 acres of cane, do you mean to say that they could do the whole of the work to grow, cultivate, cut, and deliver the cane at the mill? Yes, I think they could. G. Ironsides.
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6313. And about what would be the average of such a crop as they could grow? About 20 tons to the acre.

6314. Well, after carrying on now as you have done for the last two or three years with white labour, are you perfectly satisfied with your prospects, and believe you can make it pay? Yes; fully satisfied. I am of the same opinion now as I was before I went into it.

6315. *By the Chairman*: Are you pretty well acquainted with the shareholders of the company? Yes.

6316. Are they all of the same opinion as yourself? I do not know whether they are or not. I have never heard any saying they wished to have black labour.

6317. What amount of capital have you invested in your own selection? I could not give you the amount.

6318. Could you give us the approximate amount? I know what I started with, and I have not gone back. I started with £700. I think £3,000 altogether has been invested in the estate.

6319. Then you are firmly of opinion, from your knowledge of the district, that with good seasons the North Eton Central Mill would pay? I am quite sure of it.

6320. Both interest and working expenses? Yes.

6321. And you could grow the cane exclusively by white labour? Yes.

WILLIAM ROBERTSON examined:

6322. *By the Chairman*: You are a selector residing in this district? Yes.

6323. Are you one of the directors of the North Eton Central Mill Company? Yes.

6324. And you are a shareholder in the company? Yes.

6325. Were you present at the meeting held in this district by Mr. Hodgkinson? No.

6326. But you signed the necessary documents undertaking to grow a certain amount of cane by white labour? Yes.

6327. How many acres did you undertake to cultivate? 10 acres.

6328. How many acres have you under cultivation? 10 acres.

6329. How long have you been growing cane? Two years.

6330. Have you taken any crop off the ground? Yes.

6331. When? Last season.

6332. How much did you take off? I can hardly recollect what it was. I only took about half the crop to the mill; the other half I sold to selectors who wanted it as plants. I had something like from 2 to 3 tons to the acre; that is all.

6333. Are you able to say how many tons you sold to the mill? No, I can't say; I do not know. I sold to the mill about £10 worth of cane, and counting that at 10s. a ton, would mean about 20 tons of cane. I received £4 19s., say £5, from those people who bought it for plants.

6334. *By Mr. Cowley*: Then you got £15 for your 10 acres? Yes.

6335. *By the Chairman*: Have you still got the 10 acres under cane? Yes.

6336. At the meetings of the board of directors, did you go into the question of ways and means as to the probable receipts and probable expenditure, before the crushing season commenced? Oh, yes; most decidedly.

6337. How many tons do you estimate that you have to grow to pay interest on the capital invested and working expenses? 1,500 tons of sugar to be manufactured.

6338. Is the area which the shareholders have at present under cane likely to produce that amount? No; it is not.

6339. What is it likely to produce? It is likely to produce 2,000 tons of cane if they extend their operations.

6340. But what are they likely to produce now? They are capable of doing it, but they want tramways; and there are a lot of shareholders who would increase their area considerably if they had tramways.

6341. *By Mr. King*: How many acres are under crop for next season by the shareholders? I am not in a position to say.

6342. Have they the area under cultivation to yield 1,500 tons? No. The season has been so very dry that they could not possibly get it.

6343. *By the Chairman*: Is there any unwillingness on the part of shareholders to comply with the conditions originally signed? There is unwillingness in some cases; in a few cases which are exceptions. There was unwillingness in one instance where a man contrived to get possession of his deeds. He had signed a bill of encumbrance to the company, and then worked underhand to get the Government to issue the deeds to him, and he obtained them and passed them over to the bank and lodged them there, and now he says "Oh, the company can do what they like."

6344. How long is it since he got his deeds? I am not sure; but I should say four or five months.

6345. Was it too late for the board of directors to have lodged a caveat against any dealings with those deeds? At that time I was not on the directorate. I have only recently been appointed a director. We wrote down eight weeks ago to the Government on the subject, and we cannot get a satisfactory answer.

6346. How long have you been a director? Only about nine weeks. Not so long as that. Since the first of the year.

6347. Then practically you know very little about the financial position of the company? Can you tell us what your liabilities are now? There is £25,000 due to the Government. That is the limit of the company.

6348. Have you received the whole of that £25,000? No; we have received £20,000 odd. They hold about £4,800 of the balance due for the mill. This mill has been bought nobody knows how. The company does not know how the mill was bought. I was at a meeting of shareholders one night and somebody suggested that if the money was available, and if they could get it, they should buy the mill. That was reported on the minutes of the meeting as having been sanctioned by the shareholders. It was never sanctioned at all. At all events the mill was bought, and we had to pay for it. This mill was shovelled up I do not know how. It is too big.

6349. Who

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W. Robertson. 6349. Who prepared the minutes? R. D. Dunn. He took down the minutes, and Hodges got them afterwards and published them as being carried by the meeting. The meeting in reality never decided to purchase the mill at all.

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6350. How did the meeting come to know that the mill was for sale? There was a man there to sell it.
6351. At the following meeting were the minutes read and confirmed by the shareholders? They were never submitted. They were signed by the chairman as correct. They were confirmed by the chairman signing his name at the foot of them; that is all.

6352. And yet you are quite positive that no resolution was passed at the meeting authorising the directors to purchase the mill? Yes; no such proposition was submitted.

6353. And yet it appears on the minutes as having been passed? Yes; the chairman was not present at the meeting and he signed the minutes, and did not know anything about it. Ironsides, who signed them, says he knows nothing.

6354. Is there a lawsuit pending now with regard to the man who sold you the mill? Yes; a writ has been issued against the company. There was something wrong with the mill, and the company had to have it overhauled and repair some things.

6355. How have the company provided for the payment of interest and the payment of working expenses for the current year? The Queensland National Bank offers them as much money as ever they like.

6356. Is this "as much money as ever you like" to be obtained from the bank in the shape of an overdraft for which you are personally responsible? I do not know. I have not been in conversation with the manager of the bank. I am told that we can get plenty of money from the bank.

6357. Have you never signed a cash credit bond? I have not.

6358. Have any of the other directors done so? I do not know.

6359. And yet you can get as much money from the Queensland National Bank as you want? Yes; I have been told so.

6360. By Mr. King: I understand that you admit owing the Crystal Brook Company a sum of £1,200, and that the Government have that sum left out of the £25,000 which will be paid over if the vendors accept it? Yes.

6361. If this lawsuit should go on and the company should lose, and be let in for £2,000 costs, how will they meet it? I do not know how they are going to meet it. The have got no money.

6362. Supposing you do not lose, and the interest of the £25,000 only commence on the 1st January of this year, and the interest will amount to about £2,000 a year, do you see any means of paying that money to the Government and providing for the next crushing? No.

6363. Do you know what was the cost of working the mill during the crushing? I can only refer to the statement of revenue and expenditure. We have had no balance sheet laid before us since the company was started. I do not know what the assets and liabilities are. We have a statement of revenue and expenditure. In fact, the company is in a very confused state at the present time.

6364. Can you say what was the expense of working the mill last crushing? No; I cannot say now. I can only say then by taking it for granted that the statement of revenue and expenditure is correct. I have not examined the books.

6365. Have you any idea of the cost of the crushing season, and what the expenses were for that time? It would be almost impossible to form any idea of the crushing; it was simply a trial.

6366. But what was the cost? I could not tell you the cost.

6367. Do any of the shareholders employ any kanakas on their cultivated land in any capacity whatever? Have any of them got any kanakas or any coloured labour? No.

6368. Have you any idea what quantity of land the shareholders have got under cultivation now, for this season? Altogether I should think about 500 acres. I am not sure; that is what I put it down for. I know two men who have over 100 acres each; and all the rest have from twenty to thirty acres, and from that down to ten acres.

6369. Have the whole of the shareholders got the means of cultivating the area under cane that they undertook to cultivate? No; they have not the means.

6370. I see that the price you give the shareholders for cane is 10s. a ton delivered, and you have bought cane from outsiders at 13s. a ton. Do the shareholders like that? Some of them do not like it. They cannot see that it is for their own interest that the company should take it at that price. It costs just as much to work the mill and crush their own cane as it does to crush the extra cane that they purchase for 13s. a ton. The sugar obtained from that cane is for the benefit of the company.

6371. You are cultivating ten acres of cane? Yes.

6372. What is the cost of cultivating those ten acres with white labour? The money that I laid out on it was £80. I have cleared the land, and it cost £80 to get it cleared and made ready for the plough and planted.

6373. Last year; what did it cost you? Only about £5 for the ten acres. The way I cultivate it makes it difficult to ascertain exactly what it cost; because I have men employed in my business, and I send them down into the cane field to work when they can be spared, and have very little else to do.

6374. Do you do the cutting and carting by day labour? I do it myself. I employ a man, and in his spare time he delivers the cane to the mill.

6375. By Mr. Cowley: As a director, are you thoroughly satisfied with the mill as it now stands? No; I can't say that I am. I have not had an opportunity of making myself acquainted with all the workings of it, and I will not be satisfied till I do so.

6376. Do you know if this mill will want any additions to it to enable it to take off a big crop? Yes; there are additions required.

6377. Have you estimated the cost? Mr. Lyle is our engineer; we leave that to him. He says that the cost would be about £1,000 for subsidisers, coolers, filters, and clarifiers.

6378. If £1,000 were expended on the mill would it render it capable of taking off 1,500 tons of sugar? Yes. But it would require a further cost of £5,000 or £6,000 for a tramway to bring the cane to the mill.

6379. Have you any additional security to give if you borrow this money, and are you prepared to give it? Only in making the tramway. People have said that if that was done they would take up shares.

6380. And will they mortgage their property the same as the others? They have said so; whether they will stick to it or not I can't say.

6381. Are

6381. Are you willing to give additional security if the tramway is made? Yes; I would take up more shares, and give additional security. I have given too much security. I may say that £125 is my liability to the company, and I have given up the deeds of 100 acres of good land. They have the deeds of my selection, and they have more security from me for my ten acres of cane than they have from people who have guaranteed thirty or forty acres.
6382. How many acres do you think that one man could plant, cultivate, cut, and cart to the mill? One man could not do anything.
6383. Supposing you had fifty acres, how many men would it take to do everything for it? Six men would cultivate, cut, and cart in one season fifty acres of cane.
6384. How many times do you generally plough your land before planting it? Three times.
6385. And three harrowings? Yes.
6386. And then you drill it? Yes.
6387. Do you trash all your cane? Yes. It lies with the company whether they accept burnt cane or not. They did accept burnt cane last season.
6388. But if required you have to trash? Yes.
6389. You say that six white men could cultivate fifty acres of cane. After including all the expenses of clearing, cultivating, &c., do you think you could grow cane to pay? Yes; if the seasons were favourable.
6390. When you say that your 10 acres of cane cost you last year £5, what do you mean? That we did it for £5. It was nearly all ratons.
6391. Did they have to plough and harrow it? Yes; of course.
6392. Did you hoe it all? No.
6393. Any trashing? It is not fit for trashing; there is nothing to trash yet.
6394. It has cost you £5 up to the present? Yes; since we took the cane out in October.
6395. Have you ever made an estimate of the cost of manufacturing sugar by your mill? I have merely estimated the cost to be about £4 10s.
6396. Is that manufacturing alone, or preparing it for market? Everything—preparing it for market.
6397. *By Mr. King*: Does that include interest on the cost of the mill and depreciation? No; I do not take that into account.
6398. *By Mr. Cowley*: And does this refer to your employing white labour only in the mill? Yes.
6399. How many men do you employ in the mill? I am not sure; about twenty-five men, I think; but at times there are more employed than at others on the regular staff.
6400. Do you buy firewood? Yes.
6401. What do you pay per cord? Nine shillings.
6402. Delivered? Yes. I have paid more than that.
6403. *By the Chairman*: How long have you been living in this district? Fifteen years.
6404. And how long have you been an employer of labour? Eight years.
6405. What labour have you employed during that time; have you ever employed coloured labour? No.
6406. From your experience in this district during the time you mentioned, are you of opinion that in this part of the colony sugar cane can be grown profitably with white labour? Yes.
6407. *By Mr. Cowley*: Profitably? Yes; on the central mill system; if you can get the right sort of people to grow it—white people who will go to work.
6408. *By the Chairman*: Are you personally acquainted with the shareholders of the company of which you are a director. Yes.
6409. Are you of opinion that they are the proper class of persons to grow cane in this district with white labour? Yes; under favourable circumstances. We have had a very disastrous season.
6410. Is the district of Mackay largely settled on by small selectors? There are a few very large estate holders, and they are the curse of the district. The unfortunate selectors are scattered about. The majority of the people are selectors in the Mackay district.
6411. Have these selectors families growing up? Yes.
6412. Are many of them sons? They have a fair average of sons and daughters.
6413. The boys will be growing up and looking for employment by-and-by? Yes.
6414. Are any of them growing up now and working cane with their fathers? Yes.
6415. Do you think that if the land was more settled on a larger proportion of native-born white labour would be open for employment? Yes.
6416. Is the district healthy? Yes.
- 6416a. Is it suitable for the European constitution? Yes; it is exceptionally healthy.
6417. Then, from your fourteen years' experience in this district, having grown sugar cane yourself, are you satisfied that it can be grown profitably with white labour? Yes; in favourable seasons. If we do not get rain, and have no artificial means to irrigate, we can't get good crops with any labour.
6418. That is only in relation to the profit? Yes; but we have had an exceptional drought. The flood and cyclone were equal to a drought, and we have had a drought on the top of it again.
6419. Do you think that the drought has seriously interfered with the success of your mill? Yes, most decidedly.
6420. Was the crushing last year merely a test, or was it taken in the ordinary course of business? Merely a test to see that the mill was all right, and that everything was in going order, and to find out any defects that there might be about the mill, and not for making money at all.
6421. Did you not really crush all the cane grown by the shareholders? Yes, we crushed all the cane grown by the shareholders, except in one case.
6422. Then although it was a test, it was a test with all the cane grown? Yes, we had to take the cane off the land for the people. It would not do to allow the cane to stop there.
6423. *By Mr. Cowley*: What wages do you pay agricultural labourers? £1 a week and tucker.
6424. What was your average crop of cane? Last season it was about two acres to the ton.
6425. What was the average yield of cane last year? Well say an acre to the ton.
6426. What is it in favourable seasons? About 14 tons to the acre. Taking everything, ratons and plant cane, about 14 tons an acre.
6427. And you would be satisfied to go on extending your area with white labour, getting 14 tons to the acre. Would that pay you for your outlay and the interest on capital? Yes. I would be quite satisfied with 14 tons an acre at 10s. a ton, which would be £7 an acre.

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6428. *By*

- W. Robertson. 6428. *By the Chairman* : Could fifty acres be cultivated by six Europeans as you have stated? Yes.
 18 Feb., 1889. 6429. That is an average of about eight and a-quarter acres to the man? Yes. That is if they were working the land for themselves, and reaping the benefit of it. They would do it for themselves, but I would not like to employ them myself and expect each man to cultivate eight and a-quarter acres.
 6430. *By Mr. Cowley* : How many men would it take if you were employing them to cultivate fifty acres of cane and paying them £1 a week? About ten or twelve.
 6431. Is your land pretty good? Yes.
 6432. After your land was cleared and stumped how much rent would you ask if you leased it to anyone? It all depends upon what sort of man he would be. I would ask a higher rent from one than I would from another.
 6433. Say a good farming man? I cannot answer that question. But I might start at £2 or 30s., or, say, £1 an acre. Some get more and some get less.
 6434. But £1 an acre would barely pay you for your outlay. It would cost you more than £3 an acre to stump, clear, and fence? That is quite correct.

DUNCAN McINNIS examined :

- D. McInnis. 6435. *By the Chairman* : You are secretary of the North Eton Central Sugar Company, Limited? Yes.
 18 Feb., 1889. 6436. How long have you held the position? Since the 1st of August—for about six months.
 6437. Can you inform us upon what basis the company was formed? The memorandum of association will inform you.
 6438. What was the capital of the company? In the first place it was £20,000, and they got a further advance of £5,000.
 6439. How much of that has been expended? The whole of it.
 6440. How much has been received from the Government? £25,000.
 6441. Have you received the whole amount from the Government? There is a balance lying in the Treasury now to make the final payment on the machinery. There is a dispute as to the amount due, but I believe it is in a fair way to be settled.
 6442. In point of fact a lawsuit is pending? It is pending. We had an offer made the other day, and I have no doubt it will be settled.
 6443. The company have been served with a writ? Yes; and they have given instructions to defend the action.
 6444. When that claim is satisfied the whole of the money of the company will be practically expended on the mill? Yes.
 6445. What provision is made for carrying on the mill financially? There is no provision. The directors will have to endeavour to raise money from the bank upon what security they have to offer.
 6446. Out of what fund are they defraying expenses now? An overdraft personally guaranteed by the whole of the directors of the company.
 6447. They have given a cash credit bond? They have given an ordinary bank guarantee.
 6448. How many tons of cane were crushed last season? About 450 acres were crushed, but I believe the majority of it was hardly fit for crushing. It was horrible stuff.
 6449. What amount of sugar was manufactured? 100 tons.
 6450. What were the working expenses of the mill last crushing season? About £1,500.
 6451. Out of what fund was that paid? We drew on the bank. Part of it was paid out of the last £5,000 granted by the Government. The amount due on the machinery was £4,235, and the balance, £764, was placed to our credit in the bank by the Government.
 6452. Then, practically, the £1,500 was paid partly out of capital and partly out of overdraft? Yes.
 6453. Has that overdraft been paid off? There is still an overdraft.
 6454. Are you sure that all the directors are personally liable for the overdraft? No; they are not now. The directors were changed last month.
 6455. How does the overdraft stand in relation to the new directors? The shareholders who signed the guarantee are still liable to the bank although they are not directors.
 6456. Did they sign the bond as shareholders or directors? As directors, I believe. They are personally liable.
 6457. There can absolutely be a change of directory without any personal liability attaching to it? Yes; they are liable as private individuals. They had to do something of that sort or they could not get any money.
 6458. What is the amount of overdraft at this moment. It is very small now. We have realised on nearly all our sugar, and I believe the overdraft is down to about £200.
 6459. Have the directors contemplated the expenses for the coming season? I do not think so. I do not know that any arrangements have been made.
 6460. Have they not had an ordinary meeting to consider the ways and means of the company, and how the interest, capital, and working expenses are to be paid? The first meeting I was at on the 28th of last July the chairman asked the meeting to suggest some means for carrying on during the crushing, and no one had any suggestion to offer. They left it entirely to the directors. The directors did the best they could. The shareholders would not make themselves liable in any way.
 6461. Has the Colonial Treasurer intimated to you when interest will commence from? We never heard anything about it. I do not think there is anything on record.
 6462. When the money was advanced, was anything said as to when interest would be chargeable from? I do not think so. I have never seen any correspondence.
 6463. Has any formal demand been made for either six months or twelve months' interest? No demand has been made to my knowledge.
 6464. Supposing a demand to be made by the Treasury for this interest accruing on the £20,000 already advanced, you would have to pay it? They simply could not pay it; they have no means.
 6465. Are you in a position to state what area is under cane by the shareholders for crushing next season? Approximately about 450 acres. There was a great deal more land prepared, but on account of the lack of rain it was impossible to get the cane in.
 6466. Then the crushing next season will be small? Very small.

6467. So that there will be no possibility whatever of paying interest? I do not think there will be any possibility. D. McInnis.
6468. Independent of your shareholders' cane, do you know of any that was purchased for crushing? 18 Feb., 1889. There was a little purchased, but I do not know how many acres.
6469. Do you know what price was paid for it? 13s. at the mill.
6470. Have you heard any complaints by shareholders that only 10s. was paid to them and 13s. to outsiders? I have heard informal complaints. No formal complaints have been made.
6471. Have you got a list of the shareholders, with the amount for which they are all personally liable? No.
6472. Then really you do not know who are and who are not shareholders? I could not swear positively. If put on my oath I should hesitate a good deal, although practically I know who they are.
6473. You have not a copy of the deed of encumbrance—the one signed? No; they have been applied for to the Government, but have not been sent up. I have never seen them.
6474. Did all the shareholders transmit their deeds to the Government to have the encumbrance endorsed on them? Yes; all the freeholders, and it remained with the Government to endorse those that had not been issued.
6475. Do you know how many shareholders had not their deeds? The majority of them. I believe only three or four were freeholders.
6476. Has it come to the knowledge of the board of directors that some of the shareholders who were not freeholders at the time have become freeholders since, and that the deeds have been issued to them by the Crown without the encumbrance being endorsed on them? Yes.
6477. What action has the company taken to protect itself? I wrote down to the Registrar of Titles who signed the bill of encumbrance on one of the freeholder's deeds and asked him if such was the case, and he wrote back and said he could not tell me; that it would be too much trouble to search and find out. Upon receipt of that, I wrote down to the Treasurer asking him to be kind enough to obtain the information for me. I wrote on the 8th December, and received no answer.
6478. Has the attention of the company's solicitor been drawn to this? No; not yet.
6479. He has not advised you what to do to protect the interests of the company? No; the company's solicitor spoke to me just before I heard of the matter, and warned me there would be trouble with regard to this.
6480. Do you personally know that one of the shareholders has lodged his deeds, which he signed on undertaking to mortgage to the company, with a bank and has obtained a cash credit on them? I know two who have got their deeds and parted with them. I could not swear to it; but practically I believe it is the truth.
6481. Since this has come to the knowledge of the directors, have they drawn the attention of the Minister for Lands to the fact that only three or four freeholders entered the company on its formation, and that others are now entitled to their deeds and are receiving them without the encumbrances being endorsed on them? No; I wanted to get an admission from the Government that these informalities had been allowed. I wanted to get their admission that the deeds had been issued without the encumbrances being endorsed on them. I wrote to the Registrar of Titles on the 17th of September, asking him the question; but no reply has been received. I do not want to take any steps until I am officially informed that such is the fact. In one case it has come to the knowledge of the directors that a deed has been issued from the Real Property Office without the encumbrance being endorsed on it, and, if that is true, the Government lose more than one-third of their security.
6482. Have you prepared a balance-sheet showing the financial position of the company after the crushing, or up to the end of 1888? No; no balance-sheet has ever been prepared. All that has been prepared is a statement of receipts and expenditure.
6483. Can you say what is the total amount of the liabilities of the company at the present time, not including the debt to the Government? I think two small accounts are owing—one for £39 and another for £35.
6484. Then there is the debt of £200 to the bank. I find that our whole liabilities up to the present time would not amount to more than £100.
6485. That is in addition to the liability for the machinery, which is disputed? Certainly.
6486. Has the company made any advances to shareholders? Yes.
6487. What advances have been made? The total amount is about £200.
6488. To how many shareholders? Four or five?
6489. How many acres of cane have the shareholders under cultivation? I should say about 120.
6490. When were these advances made? Within the last three months. There was one advance made to a man named Lind, and his cane last year did not reach the amount advanced to him, and he lately died in the hospital. I do not know how that will come out. The money was advanced more than three months ago, and he died owing £30.
6491. How is the money obtained? The company guarantees the bank, and the shareholder practically gets an advance through the directors paying the bank interest.
6492. That is an additional £200 of liability? We do not consider it a liability, because there is an asset that exceeds it.
6493. *By Mr. King:* Do you believe that the whole of the shareholders are in a financial position to cultivate the acreage of cane which they have guaranteed to cultivate? I believe practically they are. There may be one or two small exceptions. I do not know their private affairs, but taking them all around I might say they are.
6494. Was this man who died in the hospital a freeholder, or did he lease the land? He had his deeds. He was one of the two who got his deeds without the encumbrance being endorsed on them, and I believe some one has them now.
6495. Is the land mortgaged to any one else? Yes.
6496. Supposing interest is only charged from the 1st January last, the interest on £25,000 at 8 percent. would be £2,000, do you see any prospect of the mill earning that amount of profit during this year? No, certainly not.
6497. To what do you attribute the fact that the mill will not be able to pay interest? To the dulness of the seasons, and the consequent inability of the shareholders to get their cane planted.

D. McInnis. 6498. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say that 450 acres were crushed, yielding 100 tons—has that been actually realised or is it only the estimated quantity? We have sold all except about eight tons in the sugar-house.
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6499. Can you tell us the net receipts of what you have already sold? It averaged between £12 or £13 a ton net.

6500. How much labour did you employ in the mill? We averaged about forty Europeans.

6501. What was the rate of wages paid to labourers? £1 a week to common labourers.

6502. What number were employed at that rate? I do not know.

6503. Rations and house are extra? Yes.

6504. Can you tell us how much interest is due, as shown in your own books? No; because we have never known when the interest was to begin.

6505. Did you not expect interest to date from the time of the first advance? I have never been informed on the matter.

6506. You have 450 acres to crush this year of the shareholders cane—can the whole of that cane be brought to the mill without a tramway? Yes, certainly; but not profitably to the mill. They cannot keep the mill going. If you give them their own time they could bring it to the mill.

6507. Have you every reason to believe you will get those 450 acres? It will all come to us.

6508. Can you tell us how many acres of land are actually mortgaged to the Government as security for the £25,000 expended? No; I have never had the bills of encumbrance.

6509. Have you the copy of receipts and expenditure with you? It is only the statement of receipts and expenditure for the last six months.

6510. There are others prior to that? Yes; I only know of two others that have been submitted.

6511. Are you not by your articles of association compelled to submit a balance sheet to the shareholders every six months, or at the ordinary general meeting? Yes.

6512. Has it never been submitted? No; there has never been a balance sheet made out.

6513. Have you never been directed by the chairman of directors to furnish the shareholders with a balance sheet? No.

6514. Do you keep a regular set of double entry books? Yes.

6515. Have you received instructions from the Auditor-General how to keep your books? Yes.

6516. And you keep them as per his instructions? Yes; I am just starting to write up the new books.

6517. Then you are in a position now to strike a balance sheet. You have all the requisite information at your disposal to enable you to strike a balance sheet up to the end of last year? If the question of interest was settled.

6518. Have any of your shareholders ever informed you, as secretary, that they cannot grow cane profitably with white labour? Not as secretary.

6519. Have they ever expressed any dissatisfaction in your presence; or desired to employ coloured labour? No, not officially.

6520. Are you aware whether an estimate has ever been made of the necessary sum to complete the mill—that is to take a crop of a thousand tons off. Has the engineer ever submitted an official report? No, he has never submitted a statement.

6521. *By Mr. King*: Is any additional expenditure required to complete the mill? Yes.

6522. *By Mr. Cowley*: Can you give us any idea of the amount required? I have no idea. The engineer is here.

6523. How often do your directors hold their meetings? At present once a month.

6524. Do you always attend and take minutes? Certainly.

6525. *By Mr. King*: What staff does the company employ outside the off season? Only myself and the engineer.

6526. What is your salary? £100.

6527. And the engineer's? £300.

6528. There were five men sifting sugar the other day when we were at the mill; what wages are they getting? I believe four of them are getting £1 a week and one 15s.

6529. *By Mr. Cowley*: Was not one of those men an engine driver? One is. He is a selector now and was glad to get a job of that sort.

6530. Have any shareholders expressed to you any dissatisfaction with the position in which they find themselves in connection with the growing of sugar cane for the company? Not officially. No formal complaint has been lodged.

6531. *By the Chairman*: Have the directors had under consideration the importance of laying down a tramway in connection with the North Eton Central Mill? Yes; their idea is that it will be impossible for the shareholders to deliver their cane to the mill unless by tramway on account of the selections being so scattered.

6532. Where is it proposed to put these tramways? It is proposed to put the main line down from the mill in a north-west direction, which would thus tap the best land. Then portable lines could also be laid.

6533. What is the estimated cost? About £6,000 or £7,000.

6534. *By Mr. Cowley*: For how many miles? We should require about ten miles.

6535. *By the Chairman*: Do you think the area of land under cultivation would be increased by having the tramways laid down? Certainly.

6536. Do you think the land owners would give a guarantee to that effect? Yes. I have a document which I sent down to the Government showing the acreage of cane which would be cultivated over and above the amount which the shareholders were bound to grow. The only way in which the company can assure the mill being kept going is to undertake all the harvesting, and by so doing relieve the grower of the labour of harvesting his own cane.

6537. Was that document being prepared with the knowledge and sanction of the directors? Yes. The line would also tap the selections of many men who are not shareholders who would gladly grow cane for the mill under agreement. Of course the agreement would contain the provision that only white labour was to be used.

6538. *By Mr. King*: You have had the portable tramways placed under offer to you at a certain price? Yes. I have made enquiries.

6539. The price is £550, f.o.b. in London? It was, at that time.

6540. Have

6540. Have you any reason to suppose that it is cheaper now? No, but I should think the quotations would not hold good for more than a reasonable period.
6541. If the material is £550 a mile laying it would be a considerable expense? Certainly.
6542. I suppose you would want some trucks? That price includes trucks.
6543. How many to the mile? I believe we were to have a hundred trucks on that estimate.
6544. One hundred for ten miles? Yes.
6545. You said you did not see how the mill could pay the interest due on the cost of construction—how would it pay the additional interest on the tramway? The thing will never pay unless the mill is kept going, and it cannot be kept going without a tramway.
6546. If the tramway is constructed, is there any probability of your paying interest on the mill and tramway? I believe there is.
6547. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say it is impossible to keep the mill going without a tramway—are there not many other selectors in this district who are in the same position as the mill shareholders, and who cannot deliver cane without a tramway? Certainly.
6548. Do you think the same privileges should be extended to them? If they could get it.
6549. What guarantee can you give for this £10,000 which you propose to borrow for the tramway—have the directors any guarantee to give other than what they have given? No; they could mortgage the tramway.
6550. Will all these other settlers who will grow cane become shareholders, and mortgage their property? I consider it probable that some will.
6551. Have any offered to do so? No; they have not been asked.
6552. You say that providing you get this tramway the company will harvest the cane. Is it their intention to do so by white labour at weekly wages? No; by contract.
6553. Do you purpose to use locomotives on the line? No; simply horses.
6554. Have you arrived at any idea as to the amount to offer for cutting and loading cane by contract? The details have not been arranged yet.
6555. What price do you intend to pay the farmers for cane when you cut and load? Nothing has been settled yet.

WILLIAM LYLE examined:

6556. *By the Chairman*: You are engineer and manager for the North Eton Central Mill Company? Yes.
6557. You erected the whole of their machinery? Yes.
6558. Is it complete? No.
6559. Is it capable now of turning out 1,500 tons of sugar in a season? With a few additions.
6560. How much would it cost to make it complete and capable of turning out 1,500 tons of sugar? Probably about £2,000.
6561. Supposing the capacity of the mill was required to be 2,000 tons, how much would it require to complete it? Of course the mill even now as it is might go on crushing, but not economically. I could easily spend £5,000 or £6,000 upon it.
6562. *By Mr. Cowley*: That is the total cost, including bricks, labour, and everything? It is an increase of tank power I want. I have not gone into it very minutely, but approximately I should say about £2,000 would be required.
6563. Can you form any idea of how many cords of firewood are required to make a ton of sugar at your mill? With the boilers I have at present I consider about two cords.

WILLIAM HENRY HYNÉ examined:

6564. *By the Chairman*: How many years' experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar cane? W. H. Hyné. Eighteen.
6565. What is the name of the estate you now hold? Meadowlands and Balmoral.
6566. What is the total area? 1,437 acres.
6567. How much have you under cultivation? About 320 acres.
6568. How many acres of cane of your own production were crushed last season? 200.
6569. How much sugar did your own cane yield? 250 tons.
6570. Did you also purchase cane? Yes, from farmers adjoining.
6571. How many tons of cane did you purchase from them? About 1,800.
6572. What did you give per ton for it? 18s. delivered at the mill, but when they cut and loaded only, I gave 12s.
6573. What did you do with your molasses? Fed the horses with it.
6574. What amount of capital is invested in your estate? £50,000. That is, of course, a rough estimate.
6575. What rate of interest did it return last year? None.
6576. Has it ever returned interest on the capital invested? Yes; I made £10,000 a year out of it at one time.
6577. When did it commence to fail? Since 1883.
6578. What were the working expenses for 1884? £5,500.
6579. What labour have you employed in working the plantation? Europeans and kanakas, and one Chinaman as cook.
6580. What average wages have you paid to the coloured classes of labour? Indented boys get £6 or 8s, according to the Government Agent's arrangement, but I have had a lot of overtime boys who have had as high as £26 a year, I am sorry to say.
6581. What wages have you paid to Europeans? They get very low wages this year—15s. and £1 a week. An odd man or two gets 22s. 6d. and 25s. Sugar boilers and blacksmiths, of course, get higher wages.
6582. What class of labour do you consider the best for field work? Europeans backed up by kanakas.
6583. In what proportion would you employ them? One European to four kanakas.
6584. Have you ever employed Europeans in field work? Yes.
6585. What

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- W. H. Hynde. 6585. What success had you with them? They did not like it; they always jibbed on it.
- 18 Feb., 1889. 6586. Have you found that generally, or only in isolated cases? I have let cane by contract to hoc many years ago. The men worked hard at it, but the ground was comparatively clean. They could not do it now, with the ground in its present state, at double the price. I gave them 9s. an acre then, and they had only about eight inches to knock away from the cane.
6587. How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each black labourer employed? Generally about five. It must vary according to the nature and condition of the land.
6588. Are the boys generally healthy on your plantation? Yes; at the present time. The last two or three years we have had very good weather for them. They have not suffered lately. When we used to have good seasons for cane, and there was a tremendous lot of rain, the boys suffered. They wore their wet clothes all day, and had to be looked after like a lot of children. That was always a source of loss.
6589. Does the field work affect the health of Europeans? I have seen great strong ploughmen come here and in less than six months they have been as thin as possible. They eat as much as they can, and seem to grow weak.
6590. Their health is affected by eating beef and not by work? More than anything else. But before the first twelve months are over they get acclimatised. They come out from home with big full moon faces, and after twelve months I have been ashamed to see them.
6591. Has your cane crop suffered from vermin in any way? No; the scrub land suffered a little.
6592. What is the cost of the machinery in your mill? When I bought Meadowlands the machinery was there, but additions cost me about £18,000 in 1883. I made 1,130 tons with the machinery that was there before. Then the farmers round about wanted me to crush cane for them, and I ordered this extra machinery. The subject of abolishing kanaka labour after a certain time was talked about in Parliament at that time. That was not agreed to, and we then ordered the machinery. I remember my partner saying that the Government would never destroy the industry. We ordered the machinery, and directly it was put up—well you know what has taken place.
6593. Was your machinery colonial made? No; it was made by Mirrlees, Tait, and Watson, of Glasgow.
6594. What is the cost of your annual overhaul? It depends upon the crop taken off. It depends upon what breakages you have. We always have an engineer and assistant occupied all their time. I have never gone into the items particularly.
6595. Can you state the causes which in your opinion have depressed the sugar industry? Yes; the unnecessary legislation that we have had, which has made kanaka labour so dear.
6596. Has not the low price of sugar had something to do with it? Of course it has, but the expense of getting kanakas is a terrible drag now. I was away in England in 1883, and when I came back I found the cost of kanakas tremendous, and I simply stopped getting them.
6597. What suggestions do you offer by which the industry can be relieved? Settle the labour question and let us know what we can rely upon, so that we may make improvements. I want to go in for irrigation. In 1883 I nearly ordered six miles of piping for my land, but then I saw the state we would be in. If the land is much worked, it wants renewing. The land becomes hard, and the crop fails. If we could only have confidence, and get an irrigating plant, I should not be afraid to grow sugar. I cannot see my way to grow sugar now without it. If I had the irrigating plant when I wanted it, I should have been independent of this drought.
6598. By Mr. King: Does your land show any signs of exhaustion? Yes; all land must show that after a few crops. It is no use saying it does not.
6599. Can you still get a good crop off your land with a fair season? I should say so.
6600. Do you use any manure? I have used it.
6601. Has your crop suffered from want of labour to cultivate it? No; I have curtailed the crops to prevent that.
6602. What were your expenses in 1883? £32,140 19s. 2d. We were putting up the machinery that year.
6603. If you could get the labour you require you would be prepared to increase your cultivation again? Of course, if I could get it at a reasonable price. I will not allow boys to cost me £30. That is too much. I came to the conclusion that it would be better to hold on and see what will be done.
6604. By Mr. Cowley: You are a thoroughly practical agriculturist? I have been at farming work for a long time.
6605. You are a graduate of an agricultural college? Yes.
6606. How many acres of sugar cane do you think a man can plough, plant, cultivate, cut, and load? If he has to do all of it, not many acres.
6607. How many men would it take to do fifty acres? I should not think of doing such a thing with white men. Three white men would do it with seven or eight kanakas. White men always get in a fix when they try it. It is utterly impossible for them to do it. Suppose there is a month's wet weather, the grass and weeds grow so fast that they lose their crop. Some of the people who grow for the central mill work fairly well up to Christmas, and then the rain comes on and they have to employ Chinamen. Once the grass gets ahead the crop is ruined. White men can do the work up to a certain stage and then they fail.
6608. Do you think that one farmer without any assistance can cultivate ten acres? No.
6609. Could he cultivate five acres? He might do five acres, but then look at the way they do it. When they are driven into a corner they simply set fire to the cane and ask me to send all my boys to cut it for them. I get thoroughly sick of that. They cannot bear to see their crop going off so slowly but want to get it off quickly and let the rats come on. I have told many men that they set fire to their cane on purpose.
6610. Would you be prepared to grow cane with white labour? Of course not. I cannot get on with blacks unless I get them cheaper than they are. There are a few Malays on the estate that I do not like to sack. When I went home in 1883 the personal property on the estate was worth £20,000; when I came back I saw how things were going; everything was so dear and the competition so keen that it was too much for me.

HUGH MCCREEDY examined :

6611. *By the Chairman* : How many years experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar cane? H. McCreedy.
Twenty-nine years, and twenty-five in the colony.

6612. What is the name of your estate? Palmyra.

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6613. What is its total area? 626 acres about.

6614. How many acres have you under cultivation? 470.

6615. With sugar cane? Yes.

6616. How many acres of cane were crushed last season? 320 of my own, and seventy from adjoining growers.

6617. And what was your total output of sugar? 192 tons.

6618. How much molasses had you? About 8,000 gallons.

6619. What was done with it? The bulk of it was sold to distillers for rum making and some was used for horse feed.

6620. What amount of capital is invested in your plantation? £20,000.

6621. What rate of interest did it return for 1889? A loss of £1,560.

6622. Did it return interest any year previously? Yes.

6623. How many years has it been working at a loss? Two years at all events. The average return for six years was $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, without reckoning interest on capital.

6624. *By Mr. King* : How do you mean "without reckoning interest on capital"? Well of course we have no right to expect interest on capital. That includes depreciation on the buildings and machinery.

6625. You have made $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, that is interest on the capital invested? Yes, of course.

6626. *By the Chairman* : Although there was a loss in 1888, the profits for previous years have given a clear return? Yes, of about $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

6627. What were the working expenses for 1888? £4,000.

6628. Is that your general average yearly expenditure? That is less than usual. The working expenses were not so high last year, in consequence of the small quantity of sugar made. The working expenses vary from £4,000 to £6,052.

6629. What labour have you employed in working your plantation? The average number of hands are kanakas sixty, and Europeans fifteen.

6630. What were the average rate of wages paid to the coloured class of labour? An average of about £6 10s. I have had no necessity for employing many time expired islanders, consequently my average is lower than that of most people.

6631. What wages have you paid to Europeans? The wages for last year were £800. Of course, I consider that I have paid the whole of my expenditure, with the exception of money paid for wages, to Europeans, because the whole of the money goes directly or indirectly to Europeans. To illustrate what I mean, I may say that in 1883-4 the amount expended was £5,482. Out of that sum only £402 was paid for islanders' wages. The whole of the balance, I contend, has been paid as white men's wages, and indirectly for white labour. In 1884-5, out of a total expenditure of £5,116, I paid £450 for islanders' wages; in 1885-6, out of a total of £5,236, I paid £441 for islanders' wages; in 1886-7 the total expenditure was £6,057, and £450 was paid for islanders' wages; in 1887-8, out of a total expenditure of £5,241, I spent £464 for islanders' wages. You see it does not vary much. The last year, 1888-9, out of a total expenditure of £4,000, I spent £420 for islanders' wages.

6632. What was the total amount of wages paid to Europeans? The yearly average would be £1,200. It varies from £800 to £1,820.

6633. What description of labour do you consider the most suitable for field work? Mixed; Europeans and kanakas. Europeans to do all work in connection with the ploughs and implements, and islanders to do weeding, trashing, hoeing, and cane cutting.

6634. In what proportion would you employ them? The best proportion would be about five to one. I have four to one, because I have a very compact little property. If a stranger came on the plantation and asked how many islanders I had, I should probably say an average of sixty; but it must not be forgotten that besides finding employment for those actually on the plantation, I find employment for many men in the district. For instance, in 1883-4, the most prosperous year we had here, the white population of the town and district was, according to the census, 7,400. Well, the greatest number of islanders ever employed in this district—and it was about that time—was 4,000. There has been no other industry here to create employment for white labour but the sugar industry, excepting two or three cattle stations which employ very few men. Take the district when in a depressed condition, in 1888-9. The white population, I presume, has decreased to about 4,000, and as a matter of fact we have not more than about 2,000 kanakas employed. Then, again, you must remember that we find employment for white population outside the district.

6635. Have you ever employed European labour for field work? I have.

6636. What has been the result? The result has been that I could not get them to continue it at all. In order to put the thing to a thorough test—although I had no doubt about it—but to put the matter thoroughly at rest and to enable me to state that I had really tried the thing, I went to the trouble of sending home to Scotland for a dozen hands expressly for work that I had previously done with islanders—that is, special islanders' work. These were not the ordinary whites I had been in the habit of employing. I sent home to a friend asking him to select about a dozen lads suitable for light work, such as hoeing and cutting cane, and such work as we consider is islanders' work. They were engaged for two years at £18 and £20 a year, and I paid their way out here. Well, I simply found it impossible to get them to work. I tried them at cutting and weeding and every conceivable kind of work, and they simply would not do it. They tried all sorts of dodges to get out of it. They shammed sickness, and I had to send for the doctor several times to find out whether they were really sick. The doctor in every case gave me a certificate to the effect that there was nothing the matter with them. The result was that in four months I was very glad indeed to cancel their agreements and let them go.

6637. *By Mr. King* : Did they say that they objected to the work? Yes; if I put them at one thing they said we do not like that sort of work, give us something else. I gave them something else, and the same thing occurred again. The only thing I could get them to do—and they did that very imperfectly—was to cart cane, and then they knocked the horses about. Their object no doubt was to get me to cancel their

H. McCreedy. their agreements, an object which they accomplished. That was my experience in attempting to get islanders' work done by whites. The work, so far as ploughing is concerned, I have no particular difficulty in getting done.

18 Feb., 1889. 6638. *By the Chairman:* How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each black labourer employed? I consider about ten acres. Of course I have sixty boys, but there are not more than forty who are employed in connection with the cultivation. A proportion of them are employed in clearing land, and a few about the mill during the crushing season. Forty out of sixty are engaged in cultivation all the year round, and as I have 470 acres, that represents about ten acres to a boy—that is with the assistance of Europeans.

6639. Have the kanakas good health, as a rule, in the field? As a rule. There is a little sickness when they come fresh to the country; but, as a rule, I have found them pretty healthy.

6640. Do Europeans suffer in health when working in the cane-field? They do, most decidedly; that is when they continue work for any length of time. They become fatigued and lose their natural vigour, and frequently remove to a cooler climate. They may stick to the work for a bit, but the invariable tendency is to clear out.

6641. Has your cane suffered from the grub or any other disease? Rust, at one time, but that is a long time ago. Since then I cannot say that we have suffered to any extent at all from disease. There was a little grub last year.

6642. What was the cost of your machinery and where was it manufactured? It was manufactured in Glasgow, and the cost of the machinery, speaking roughly, was £1,500, without the erection. Including the erection, I suppose it would amount to £2,000 with buildings and everything else.

6643. What is the approximate cost of your annual overhaul for repairs? That is not very excessive because the machinery is comparatively new—about £250 a year in my case.

6644. Can you state what, in your opinion, are the causes which have depressed the sugar industry? Yes, I have my own opinion. The first cause is the prospect of the labour supply being cut off in 1890, creating want of confidence and preventing further capital being put into the industry, knowing what the result must be if the labour is withdrawn. Some people do not agree with me in that. They say it is the low value of sugar, but speaking from my own experience, and the results I have obtained in spite of difficulties, I would be perfectly satisfied to continue sugar growing were I assured that the labour was not going to be withdrawn. That is, supposing sugar does not get any lower. It is low, no doubt, but I can make it pay perfectly well, as I have done hitherto, if I had labour. To show what my position would have been if the labour had been withdrawn—referring now to that 6½ per cent. which I told you I have made—I may mention that if I had to employ an equal number of whites to kanakas, taking them at an average of £1 a week and with rations, say 27s.—and that is not an excessive rate.—Whites would certainly not remain in this district at a lower rate of wages; they can be obtained at a lower rate at present; but we are in a very depressed condition, and wages here for labouring men must be at least 20 or 25 per cent. more than down South—well, had I been forced to employ an equal number of whites to the number of kanakas, the wages being what I have stated, as against 13s. for islanders, a loss would have been made in the six years of £7,322 sterling. People who have not had any experience in working Europeans in a climate like this may dispute the statement about having to employ an equal number of whites to kanakas, and may say that a white man can do more than an islander; but my experience is that a white man will not do as much of such work as is performed by islanders. Suppose I do so not do more weeding, or trashing, or cutting of cane than a kanaka—that is the work that I contend the islanders are required for—that would have been my position if I had been forced to employ white men instead of islanders. I, therefore, have no right to say that a white man in a tropical climate will do more than a kanaka at this particular work. It is not a question so much of what a white man can do as what he will do.

6645. Can you offer the Commission any suggestions by which the industry can be relieved from its present depression? To extend the operations of the Pacific Islanders Act for another five years. I do not say altogether, because perhaps if it was extended for another five years it would give the country a further opportunity of finding out whether we are wrong in our contention about coloured labour being necessary. I would suggest this on the following grounds: That I consider it is absolutely necessary to have the labour for sugar growing or any other tropical agriculture in existence. Without it I consider the industry must collapse; it must disappear. The same thing applies to any ordinary tropical agriculture. We are justified in asking for the labour, because it is an absolute necessity. Secondly, consequent on the failure of the Government to provide the promised substitute (I am referring to cheap European labour) for islanders when the Act abolishing the present labour was passed through the House; also that the experiment of producing sugar by white labour only, by means of Government central mills, has not been proved a success, and, according to Mr. McLean's report, the result cannot be known for another five years. I am not speaking against the central mill system. On the contrary, I believe in it. I consider it is the proper system for this country, but not without cheap and reliable labour. That is the basis of the whole business. If the farmers are allowed kanaka labour they will have the element of success at all events. Even then they will require good management. If suitable labour is not forthcoming this and all other tropical industries must disappear, destroying thereby one of the most valuable resources of the North. The destruction of agriculture in the northern coast lands, will throw out of employment a vast army of whites equal at least to two for each coloured labourer employed. The only other suggestion I would make is in reference to reciprocity, or protection in some form, so that the present value of sugar may be increased by about £3 a ton. Though I have made 6½ per cent. on my invested capital, I can state that I believe it to be a fact that I have done better, probably, than anybody else so far. Although I have made that interest, I know positively that the greater number of my neighbours have been losing money. I attribute my success to the fact that I started with no borrowed capital. I had no interest to pay. I have a very good little property, easily and cheaply managed, and I have had a good many advantages that I know many of us have not had. To that I attribute the fact that I have made 6½ per cent.

6646. Do you think the fact of your only having 620 acres, and not thousands of acres as others have, is not also an element of success? Of course; I know that my mill is perhaps on the whole rather too small, but I do not agree with people who imagine that large mills are the most profitable; I think there is such a thing

thing as having the mill too large. I think a comparatively small mill making from 1,000 to 1,200 tons H. McCreedy.
with the land all about it, is more likely to be worked profitably than a large estate with the cultivation
miles away from the mill. 18 Feb., 1899.

6647. Do you not think the fact of having large areas of unproductive land heavily mortgaged, and bearing interest chargeable to the produce of the cultivated land, has had something to do with the present depression? It might have in some cases, but in this district there are lots of properties that are not in that position and that keep all the land under cultivation, yet they are losing money heavily.

6648. You are aware that the importation of kanakas ceases at the end of 1890. What will be the effect of that on your own operations? I would not think of carrying on—not for a moment. Of course I would not stop just at the end of 1890. I would work the thing out; take all the cane I could get and utilise the labour until the time had expired, but I would not attempt to continue the cultivation of sugar or anything else.

6649. *By Mr. King:* Does your land show any signs of exhaustion from continued cultivation? Not yet.

6650. *By Mr. Cowley:* Did this 6½ per cent. that you made cover your salary or did you allow for a salary? No; it did not cover my salary.

6651. Is it 6½ per cent. profit after allowing you salary and living? It allows me equal to a salary. The expenses of myself and family are, roughly, about £300. That is equivalent to a manager's salary. It would not be right to charge a salary besides.

6652. I understand from that that you have not paid yourself a salary independent of this 6½ per cent. No.

6653. Do you buy as much cane as you would like? I buy as much as I can possibly get, and have always been open to do so.

6654. Could you take more? Yes; a little more, but I have always been prepared to increase my capacity had the outlook been sufficiently encouraging to do so. I would also have gone in for irrigation three years ago, but for the fact that I considered I had quite enough money invested in an industry that might come to an end if the labour was withdrawn. My intention when I started was to extend very considerably as time went on. To put the thing in a clear light, if I was offered the best sugar property in Queensland at the present moment on condition that I did the work with white labour alone, and it was offered to me for nothing, I would not take it as a gift.

6655. *By the Chairman:* Then if a Melbourne gentleman the other day offered a resident here his freehold of eight hundred acres for nothing, he did a very good thing? He did.

6656. *By Mr. King:* What price do you pay for the cane you purchase? 8s. and 8s. 6d. standing in the field, and 11s. and 11s. 6d. delivered; but I pay for cane on a principle of my own, and perhaps it is the best way. I have an arrangement with the growers round about to this effect. I take sugar to net £14 a ton. If it goes at less than that they have to take 6d. a ton less for their cane. If I get £20 a ton for my sugar they would get 13s. 6d. a ton for their cane. That is, if there is an improvement in the market the farmers benefit with me, and also share in the loss. They have never yet had to share in a loss.

6657. *By Mr. Cowley:* Is that the usual agreement in the district? No. I do not know of any one else who has that agreement. I believe in the system because it does away with any idea that the farmer may have that you are making too big a profit out of his cane.

6658. Would you consider it wise to give 14s. a ton for cane delivered, at the present time? Certainly not. The man who gives that price is working at a decided loss. I consider that when I give 11s. 6d. a ton there is no direct profit, but there is an indirect profit; it helps to keep your staff and machinery constantly going. I believe also that if this industry was in a more prosperous condition—if there was any future before it—if the new system of extraction was perfected and we were able to make a ton of sugar from 7 tons of cane—the mill-owners would be as well able to afford to give 15s. or 16s. a ton for cane delivered at the mill as they are now able to give 10s. But these things would not come into operation unless capitalists feel confident that the industry is going to exist.

6659. Are you aware that there is considerable competition for the farmers' cane in this district? I have heard so.

6660. Have you heard that as much as 15s. 6d. a ton has been offered for cane delivered? No; but I should think that any person who offered that did not know what he was about. I am quite prepared to give such a price for cane as will enable me to make the sugar without a loss, depending upon the indirect profit, but I would consider the limit in that case would be about 12s. a ton.

DANIEL SHEPPERD examined;

6661. *By the Chairman:* You are in business in Mackay? Yes.

6662. As a storekeeper? An ironmonger.

6663. You are a member of the Chamber of Commerce? Yes.

6664. What has been the effect of the present depression in the sugar industry on the trade of Mackay? It has been to reduce it very much. 18 Feb., 1899.

6665. Can you give us any statistics to show the effect of the depression from 1883 up to the present time? Yes; I prepared a list of my own wages that I have paid. The amount of wages paid in 1882 by me was £1,925 9s. 6d.; 1883, £2,638 19s. 6d.; 1884, £2,879 15s.; 1885, £2,765 11s. 9d.; 1886, £2,374 1s. 6d.; 1887, £2,092 12s. 6d.; and 1888, £1,777 15s. 6d. Just now I am paying £26 10s. a week, which gives a business man and one identified with the commercial progress of Mackay, what suggestions can you offer by which the sugar industry can be relieved from its present depression? Well, I am not sure that I know of anything. I am not skilled in things that do not concern me. I believe the depression has been worse on account of the uncertainty of the labour question.

6666. Speaking as a business man and one identified with the commercial progress of Mackay, what suggestions can you offer by which the sugar industry can be relieved from its present depression? Well, I am not sure that I know of anything. I am not skilled in things that do not concern me. I believe the depression has been worse on account of the uncertainty of the labour question.

6667. Has not the Chamber of Commerce as a public body discussed this matter among themselves? They have discussed the appointment of this Commission. That is all.

6668. Have you not discussed the depressed condition of trade in Mackay in consequence of the depressed condition of the sugar industry? Not specially. I do not remember it. It is a thing that is so generally understood that it would not be discussed by the Chamber of Commerce.

6669. Would

D. Shepperd.

D. Shepperd. 6669. Would you not suppose that a body representing the commercial interests of a district such as this would have met and discussed the probable causes of the depression, and what remedies could be applied for its relief, with a view of assisting the Legislature in arriving at a conclusion. We have come here to ascertain what your views and opinions are? The Chamber of Commerce you see is composed of all shades of politics, and all the different shades of politics have some special cure of their own. You will find plenty of people who will all have different cures. They all agree that the evil exists, and that the labour question has a great deal to do with it, but they will not agree about the remedy, as far as I understand.

18 Feb., 1889. 6670. Then, practically, the Chamber of Commerce has no suggestions at all to offer to the Commission? No; nothing special.

6671. *By Mr. King*: In the event of the plantations of this district being closed, what would be the effect on the town of Mackay? The effect would be a further reduction of the trade of the town—a considerable further reduction.

6672. *By the Chairman*: And depreciation of property also? And depreciation of value also. My trade with the plantations would be from one-fourth to one-third. That is to say, the plantations will have taken from one-third to one-fourth of all the stuff I have sold, and other people the rest. At present I should say the plantations are taking one-eighth, or perhaps even less. As far as the depression is concerned, it would appear as if the public are going to outlive the plantations. The plantation trade has fallen off very much.

6673. Do you mean to say that as the plantation trade falls off the general trade of the district increases? No; but it does not decrease in the same proportion.

6674. *By Mr. King*: If the plantations shut up, what article could be produced in this district for export? Nothing, that I know of.

WILLIAM ROBERTSON examined:

W. Robertson. 6675. *By the Chairman*: You are in business in Mackay? I have been since December, 1873.

18 Feb., 1889. 6676. What business have you? The Victoria Foundry.

6677. You are a member of the Chamber of Commerce? Yes; since it started.

6678. How long has the foundry been established? I started the shop in 1873, and I was about two years here before I started.

6679. What is the largest number of hands you have employed at the foundry? Fifty.

6680. What number do you employ now? Thirty were paid on the last pay day.

6681. Are you now able to find work for them? I am at present through the bridge work that I have on hand.

6682. The new bridge across the Pioneer? Yes; I have been on bridge work since 1886.

6683. What were your wages payments per week two or three years ago? I have made out a rough list of the wages. In 1881 the wages were £2,490; 1882, £3,363; 1883, £4,627; 1884, £3,280; 1885, £2,266; 1886, £2,338; 1887, £2,627; and 1888, £3,315. A total of £24,260, and an average of £3,030 per annum. My receipts in 1881 were £6,336; 1882, £11,505; 1883, £12,070; 1884, £10,505; and 1885, £8,500. That was all from general plantation work and work in the district. In 1886, £7,231; in 1887, £6,830; and in 1888, £8,475,—making a total of £22,537 for the three years. Of this amount £10,000 has been for bridge work in the Mackay district and the North.

6684. If it were not for the bridge work, what condition would your foundry be in? It would have been closed up. I could not have carried on.

6685. *By Mr. King*: Is the bridge work likely to continue? I am afraid not. I have sufficient for two or three months yet, but I do not see much ahead of that.

6686. *By the Chairman*: If anything should occur by which the plantations at present in the district would be likely to close, what effect would that have on your foundry? I do not see that there would be any use for it here, not unless I could go outside the district and secure work.

6687. *By Mr. King*: The condition of your port is very much against you getting work outside the district? If the district were to develop into a manufacturing district, or if the sugar industry were to go ahead, the difficulties of the port could be overcome. I have sent pretty heavy castings to Townsville—2½ tons weight—so that, as far as I am concerned, there is not very much difficulty in shipping castings or anything else. The difficulty is that skilled labour is dear and not always to be had when you want it.

6688. *By Mr. Coudey*: Is this bridge work directly or indirectly connected with the sugar plantations? It is not connected with the sugar plantations.

6689. Is it outside the district? One bridge I finished on the 24th May last is on Sandy Creek below Homebush, on the Broadmead road. Of course it is a great benefit to the district.

6690. Would that still be erected if there were no sugar plantations? I think it might be.

6691. Are any of the bridges outside of the Mackay district? I have done work for Townsville and for the Endeavour. I have had a little over £3,000 worth of bridge work outside of the district.

6692. With the exception of that £3,000 worth, all of it has been in the district? Yes.

6693. *By the Chairman*: Have you apprentices in the foundry learning the trade? Yes; I have about seven apprentices.

6694. You do not think the agricultural population outside of Mackay would give sufficient employment to keep the foundry going? Not at present.

6695. Do you manufacture ploughs and harrows? No; I do not go in for that.

6696. Do you think there is scope for that industry here? I do not think we could compete. Even now most of the ploughs used are American Sulkies. All the ploughs that McLean of Brisbane used to send up here are lying idle.

6697. Do you get much work from the plantations now? There has been very little doing during the last two years. There is another foundry in Mackay besides mine. They used to employ from fifteen to twenty hands, and they have only six employed now; so that I do not think there is anything doing on the plantations. The falling off since 1883 has been about one-half.

6698. That was when the mills were being erected? Yes.

6699. The revival of the sugar industry would not have much effect in the way of erection of new mills? No; the mills are all erected.

THOMAS

THOMAS RYAN examined:

6700. *By the Chairman*: Are you a member of the Pioneer River Farmers' Association? No; I belong to no association. T. Ryan. 18 Feb., 1889.
6701. Are you a selector in the district? Yes; I am living on land I bought here about twenty years ago.
6702. What is the extent of your freehold? Eighty acres now.
6703. Are you growing sugar cane now? Yes.
6704. How many acres did you grow last year? I have a crop now of fifty acres.
6705. How many acres did you grow last season? The same, but I did not crush it.
6706. What did you do with it? I planted it, and the white ants ate half the crop. Last June the frost came and wiped the lot out.
6707. Did you take it off the ground? No; it is standing there still.
6708. That is the same field that is growing now? Yes.
6709. *By Mr. Cowley*: Ratoons? No; plant cane. A lot of it did not die, and the suckers came up again. It paid better to let it stand.
6710. *By the Chairman*: What labour do you employ in growing cane? Black labour.
6711. How many do you employ? Five or six.
6712. And no white labour? Yes; one or two occasionally.
6713. When you have had cane taken off your selection and crushed, what have you got per ton for it? I have never had less than 13s. a ton for my cane.
6714. *By Mr. King*: Delivered at the mill? The planter generally takes the cane himself and gives me 11s. a ton and he carts it. I put it down at 13s. a ton.
6715. You cut it and load it? Yes; for 11s. I have had 11s., 12s., and 14s. during the last sixteen years.
6716. Have you made a living out your cane growing? No. I am living now on as good a piece of land as there is in Mackay, and if I employed white labour I could make nothing out of it for my family. I have a big family, seven of them, and the oldest is only eleven years, and if I were to pay white labour I should have nothing for myself. During the last eighteen months, owing to the central mill being established, I bought sixty acres of land. I gave £5 an acre for it, on the strength of getting a fair price for the cane. The central mill people offered me a price for the cane on the sixty acres that I bought two years ago, but the white ants and frost destroyed the crop. I am £1,300 out of pocket through employing white labour, and at present I am grubbing along with my own labour, and have no return out of it.
6717. *By Mr. King*: Are you a shareholder in either of the central mills? No.
6718. Have you signed any agreement to grow cane this year? No.
6719. What mill do you usually sell your cane to? To Meadowlands, the River Estate, and Foulden.
6720. *By Mr. Cowley*: In good seasons could you make cane growing pay by using your own labour and a few kanakas, at the price you have been getting? Not under 13s. a ton delivered at the mills.
6721. Could you make it pay at that? I could. I could make a living at that. I want to mention about this central mill. There are a couple of hundred farmers who have asked me to speak about it, and find out whether the shareholders of the central mill should be allowed kanakas. They have pulled down the price of cane. As high as 15s. a ton has been given for cane for the last fifteen years, and they have pulled the price of cane down to 11s. a ton. They simply want black labour. I want to point out that it is very wrong of the Government to allow black labour to them. They were given the money for the central mill, and they have prevented me and other people from making a living. The planters say "How can we give you 13s. and 14s. a ton for the cane when the central mill will not give it." If the central mill is not a success, I should say that the Government should turn it into a real central mill and charge so much a ton to each farmer for crushing his cane. That would mean £40,000 to £50,000 a year being spent in the district, as the mill is capable of turning out 2,000 or 3,000 tons of sugar. Farmers have selected land in the district and want to have the line extended to them, and let the Government make the best of the mills. If labour is allowed to the district and limited to four kanakas to one white man the industry would be a success.

EDWARD VINCENT REID examined:

6722. *By Mr. King*: A statement has been made to us respecting an award made by you in a case which was submitted to you of a dispute between Mr. Long of Habana and a manager who was leaving him. It has been said that the manager was entitled to certain commission on the profits of the estate, and that you awarded him £500 as his share of the profits during one year. Will you state what the real facts of the case were? I was appointed arbitrator by the District Court, with the consent of the parties, as between Messrs. Long and Robertson and Mr. T. D. Brown, former manager of Habana. Under the agreement Mr. Brown was entitled to 1 per cent. commission on the net profits for the year ended 31st March, 1888. I examined the books carefully and audited all the accounts, as far as I could within the limited time at my disposal. I did not go through every item, but I found that the net profit for that year, exclusive of interest and depreciation of machinery, amounted to £1,503 od. I therefore awarded Mr. Brown £15 0s. 9d., being 1 per cent. on that amount. E. V. Reid. 18 Feb., 1889.

DONALD MACDONALD examined:

6723. *By the Chairman*: You are secretary of the Pioneer River Farmers' Association? Yes.
6724. How many members are there in the association? About seventy members. D. McDonald. 18 Feb., 1889.
6725. Are they all sugar growers? Principally.
6726. Have you any suggestion that you can make to us for the improvement of the condition of the farmers of the association? The conclusion that we have to come to is that we want cheap labour, for one thing, and reliable labour. The farmers also suggest that the Government should supply this reliable labour, and that the Government Immigration Agent should receive orders and supply them, thus doing away with the uncertain way in which the farmers get the labour now. That is the unanimous opinion of the farmers, who are men who have worked in the district themselves as labourers on the sugar plantations, and they have all found from their experience that they are unable to live themselves or supply their families without the assistance of cheap labour. 6727. Have

D. McDonald. 6727. Have they not tried cane growing by the aid of their own countrymen? They have. Even the families of the selectors who are here clear out;—when they leave school they clear out and look for some other work—they will not remain to do sugar cultivation.

18 Feb., 1889. 6728. *By Mr. King*: Do the farmers consider that white men can do the work that the kanaka usually does such as weeding, trashing, hoeing, and cutting cane? No; they find that they cannot do it. Several of them have tried it and cannot do it.

6729. Are the farmers who are in the Racecourse Mill members of your association? Very few of them. One of the directors of the Racecourse Mill is in our association.

6730. Are any of the shareholders of the North Eton Central Mill in your association? No; none of them.

6731. Are those farmers who belong to the Racecourse Central Mill of the same opinion as you are with respect to this question? Yes. Most of them are. Some of them have been growing cane for the last fourteen years. I have crushed cane for them when I was manager of the River Estate. They are now growing cane for the Central Mill with white labour, but they know it will not be a success. More than one says that they are trying an experiment which will not be a success. Of course all believed in the central mills when they started.

6732. Do you think it would be of any use to the farmers of this district if an experimental farm were established to show what other tropical products can be grown in the district? Of very great use. It is the very thing that is wanted, because there are so few people who have any knowledge of the cultivation of any tropical produce. An experimental farm which would grow a number of different products would be of very great use.

6733. Do you think the farmers would visit the farm and learn what could be grown? Yes; I believe they would. I have been for nearly twenty years in a tropical climate, and I know there are a great many productions that can be grown here provided we had cheap labour. Coffee, cocoa, rice, and fibres could be grown. The fibre industry requires some experience. The ramee plant is very difficult to raise from seed, but once it is grown it is easily cultivated.

WILLIAM BISSET examined:

W. Bisset. 6734. *By the Chairman*: You are a member of the Pioneer River Farmers' Association? Yes.
18 Feb., 1889. 6735. The secretary and yourself have been deputed to appear before the Commission and give evidence? Yes.

6736. Will you kindly state to the Commission what suggestions you are authorised to offer on behalf of the Farmers' Association? As far as the association was concerned, I don't think we came to any conclusion as to what suggestions should be offered. There are several suggestions I could make.

6737. Your secretary has just told us that there are suggestions that you were authorised to make on behalf of the association? To grow sugar we must have some sort of assistance in the way of cheap labour. Next year black labour is to be done away with, and the Government were going to give us a substitute, which they have not provided yet. Without cheap labour sugar growing must go to the wall, simply because the price we are getting now for the sugar cane is not sufficient to cover expenses. If labour could be had from 10s. a week, including all expenses, sugar cane might at a fair price of 12s. or 13s. a ton pay expenses, but without that it must succumb altogether. I have tried white labour myself, but to take the place of blacks it must not exceed 9s. a week. The price obtained for produce is not sufficient to enable me to pay white labour.

6738. Is there any other produce you can grow besides sugar? Yes; there are several other things, but the growing of any other produce is an experiment; if you grow cane you get a little produce; if you grow potatoes you may get a crop. I grew one crop last year, and put in another two, but the other two were complete failures. I grew maize and out of fifty acres received £35. Well that was not worth cultivating. There are fibres that might be a success. The ramee fibre I am trying now, but I have lost half of my plants through insufficient rain. Whether that is to be a success or not remains to be seen. One wants a few pounds to cultivate that, and put it on the market, and very few have the money to expend in experiments. No doubt rice would grow very well, but that has to be experimented with, and experiments cost a great deal of money. Then if you are to grow rice, you want to be in a position to irrigate. I have tried some tobacco also. I got the length of getting the plants ready for planting out, but the storm last year swept them all away, and all that I have tried since have been a complete failure on account of the drought.

6739. Then practically you think that sugar cane is really the only article that can be grown with certainty in the Mackay district? Yes.

6740. What will be the result if the importation of kanakas ceases at the end of 1890? Then the sugar industry ceases in my opinion. I am speaking now for the small farmers and selectors, who are entirely in the hands of the mill owners, and must take the price they put on the cane. I have cultivated on my own account for two years. I have tried my best, but find I am losing fully 30s. per acre whether I have white or black labour. At the present price of cane farmers cannot afford to pay more than 10s. a week, for labour, including rations and everything else. Sometimes you pay as much as 12s. or 15s. a week for kanakas, and the rations bring the price up to £1. You pay a white man £1 a week and his rations, bringing the cost up to £1 9s. per week. It is quite out of the question that the farmers can pay those wages, considering the price they get for their produce.

CORNWALLIS WADE BROWN examined:

C. W. Brown. 6741. *By the Chairman*: You are a member of the Pioneer River Farmers' Association? Yes.

6742. And one of the deputation appointed to wait on the Commission? Yes.

18 Feb., 1889. 6743. Will you kindly state as briefly as you can the suggestions that you are authorised to offer to us? One of the principal things they desire is that the coloured labour question should be settled. We must be allowed to employ coloured labour. I do not think it is possible to do without it. I have worked here for the last three years, and have had men under me for a great many years before, and I find we cannot cultivate cane and particularly do the weeding and trashing without the assistance of black labour. The white men are willing enough to plough and harrow, but they will do nothing else. In fact they
6744. That

6744. That is the suggestion which your association offers as a means of remedying the depressed condition of the sugar industry? That is one of the things that would help very much. C. W. Brown.

6745. In what proportion would they like the kanaka labour? I should think in the proportion of three to one or four to one. That would be quite sufficient. 18 Feb., 1889.

6746. Do you think that if the Polynesian Act was extended it might be extended upon that basis? I think that would be quite sufficient. I should not like to see the white man altogether out of it. I think the black men are unfitted for ploughing or harrowing, or anything connected with horses, because they spoil them, and cannot plough properly; but I certainly think we should have the aid of cheap kanaka labour. At the present time the labour is very dear, and a great many farmers cannot afford to pay for it. I would add that the work of trashing and weeding is quite unfitted for white men, because the heat is too excessive.

6747. By Mr. Cowley: Is that all that the farmers association desired you to say? Yes; that is all.

JOSEPH ANTONEY examined:

6748. By the Chairman: You are one of the shareholders of the North Eton Central Mill Company? Yes. J. Antony.

6749. You signed the deed of encumbrance mortgaging the deeds of your land to the Government in connection with that mill? Yes. 18 Feb., 1889.

6750. How many shares have you in the company? 500.

6751. What is the value of a share? £12 10s.

6752. Were you a freeholder at the time that the company was formed? No.

6753. You had not obtained your deeds from the Government? No; since the company was formed I have obtained them.

6754. Was the encumbrance or your liability to the Government endorsed on the deed? No.

6755. Was that the land that you mortgaged and gave the Government as security for your 500 shares? Yes.

6756. Have you operated financially with that deed? Yes.

6757. For other advances? Yes.

6758. Then, virtually, the Government have no security whatever so far as your shares are concerned? No.

6759. By Mr. King: I notice that in your answers to the printed questions you say that Polynesian labour is the most suitable for sugar growing? Yes.

6760. Do you consider that sugar growing can be profitably carried on without coloured labour? No; I do not.

6761. You have let part of your land to settlers to grow cane? Yes.

6762. What rent were you to receive? I let some fifty-acre and some sixty-acre farms at £1 a year for the whole lot.

6763. Are those selectors growing cane now? Yes.

6764. All of them? All, excepting four.

6765. How much land have they got under cane? Over 100 acres.

6766. Are any of the shareholders in the North Eton Central Mill employing coloured labour to grow their cane? No; I do not know of it.

6767. Are they employing Chinese? No; I never saw any being employed.

6768. By the Chairman: You have undertaken to grow cane for the central mill entirely without kanaka labour? Yes.

6769. Were you of the opinion at that time that cane could not be grown without kanaka labour, or have you since changed your opinion? I think it could be done provided we could get settlers. Every married man with his family, I think, should be able to do it. That was my opinion. I know that no man could cultivate a large area.

6770. By Mr. King: Are you satisfied with your agreement with the central mill? I am not satisfied with it at all.

6771. Do you think you will be able to make any money out of it? Not with white labour. I made agreements with my settlers, and tried to look for men with some money. I had to buy ploughs, horses, harness, harrows, grubbers, and everything to start them; and four have left me entirely, chucking everything up and clearing out.

6772. Did you advance to those four settlers £168? I bought horses and kept them in food to that amount.

6773. You advanced that money in fact? Not money in cash, but I found them in food and horses and ploughs, and money to keep the ploughs repaired.

6774. They owe you that amount? That is what money I spent on them. They left me the horses and ploughs, but they owe me for the food. One man got sick and was obliged to go to the hospital, so of course I could not keep him.

6775. You have lost a great deal of money by trying to settle these men on the land? Yes.

6776. How much did you pay for legal expenses in drawing out the leases? I have not paid anything yet. I have a bill for thirty guineas for drawing out the leases, and in addition Surveyor Crampton charged me £3 3s. for surveying each selection.

6777. By the Chairman: Was it in connection with these parties to whom you leased the land that you had to make arrangements with the bank for a loan to carry you on? When I put these settlers on I got the bank to advance me money on another selection I have. Afterwards I ran short of money to carry on these people, and I drew money upon the selection where I was growing cane. I have, in addition, a three-square-mile run on Cattle Creek, on the Nebo road. I even mortgaged that to get money to settle these people on the land. I am already indebted £1,800 to the bank on account of these people.

6778. By Mr. Cowley: Do all your tenants confine themselves strictly to white labour? The agreement is to grow cane with white labour.

ALEXANDER RICHARD MacKENZIE examined :

A. R. 6079. *By the Chairman* : You have sent in answers to our printed questions ? Yes.
 MacKenzie. 6780. I understand you want to make some statement to the Commission ? Yes; the Marian mill was erected as a central mill some six years ago to crush cane for farmers in the neighbourhood. Well, last year, shortly before crushing commenced, Mr. Ironsides, the chairman of directors of the Eton central mill, came round and made an offer to the farmers round about of a higher price than we were paying for cane. Last year we were paying 10s. delivered, and he offered 13s. delivered at the Eton mill. Well, I think that is hardly fair that this mill, which is subsidised by the Government, should be allowed to compete with a private mill. All the cane that he offered to purchase is grown by kanakas; they are paying 10s. a ton for cane grown by their own shareholders, and are offering 13s. for cane grown by kanakas. I wrote to the Colonial Treasurer about it, and a correspondence ensued. I would ask you to instruct your secretary to get a copy of this correspondence for the information of the Commission.

WALTER TRUEMAN PAGET examined :

W. T. Paget. 6781. *By the Chairman* : You are a member of the firm of Paget Brothers, of Nindaroo ? Yes.
 18 Feb., 1889. 6782. And you have been deputed to appear before the Commission on behalf of the Planters' Association of Mackay ? Yes; the Planters and Farmers' Association.
 6783. You are also chairman of the Pioneer Divisional Board ? Yes; I have been so for four years.
 6784. What experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar ? Sixteen years in this district, of sugar and other productions.
 6785. What is the total area of Nindaroo ? 1,410 acres freehold.
 6786. How many acres of that is under sugar cane and other productions ? There are 700 acres of cane, 45 acres of maize, 23 acres of sweet potatoes, and 2 acres of sorghum.
 6787. How many acres of cane were crushed from the plantation last season ? 549.
 6788. How much sugar was made ? 310 tons.
 6789. How much molasses ? 7,500 gallons.
 6790. What was done with it ? We feed it to the stock.
 6791. What amount of capital have you invested in the plantation ? £65,000.
 6792. What rate of interest did it return during 1888 ? Not any.
 6793. Has it returned interest for previous years ? Yes; in 1887 it returned us on the capital, about 4 per cent. In 1886 there was a loss; the season was wet, and we were not able to get through the crop.
 6794. What were your working expenses for 1888 ? £10,221 2s. 3d., and our loss, including depreciation on machinery and buildings, at six per cent. per annum, was £7,321.
 6795. What labour was employed in working your plantation ? The average of Europeans was 50, and the average of kanakas 130.
 6796. What were the average wages paid to kanakas ? £7 10s. per annum.
 6797. What were the wages paid to Europeans ? The total amount paid to Europeans in 1888 was £2,113 12s. 8d., and kanakas £955 13s. 8d., or an expenditure on Europeans, for wages and supplies, at the rate of £9 for every £1 paid direct to kanakas. The kanakas wages are all spent in purchasing goods in Mackay.
 6798. What description of labour do you consider the most suitable for field work ? Coloured labour, and I prefer kanakas.
 6799. Have you employed European labour in field work ? Yes.
 6800. With what result ? The result has been very unsatisfactory. They were able to do certain portions of field work, but not willing even for fair wages.
 6801. You have tried the experiment of working with European labour ? I have.
 6802. When your land gets cleared from stumps, and you are able to employ horses and machinery in the cultivation of the cane, will the quantity of black labour be diminished in favour of more whites ? I think not. The whole of the work that can be done by Europeans is done by Europeans now—such work as ploughing and harrowing.
 6803. How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each black labourer employed ? About six.
 6804. How many acres do you suppose one European could work if able to use horses and hoes on the land ? That is a very difficult question to answer. I think a hard working man might be able to plough and plant ten acres, but he could neither weed nor trash it in the wet season, more labour being required then.
 6805. Do the kanakas employed in field labour suffer in any way in their health. No; not more than any ordinary labourers.
 6806. Have you seen the health of Europeans affected by field work ? Yes; I find that they suffer from fever and dysentery during the summer months.
 6807. What is the cost per acre of felling and burning off the scrub land in your locality ? With European labour, £7; with kanaka labor, £4 10s. That is, of course, by striking an average.
 6808. What would be the cost of stumping it and making it fit for the plough ? My answer must be, that it would be impossible to stump freshly fallen scrub to make it fit for the plough. The land is simply too full of roots.
 6809. But after a given number of years you often make the experiment ? Yes. I stumped eighty acres of scrub which had been under cane for six years, last year, at a cost of 20s per acre. There were very few stumps left.
 6810. Has your cane suffered in any way from disease or vermin ? Not from any disease, but slightly from rats.
 6811. To what extent was the crop of 1888 affected by disease, vermin, or frost ? Not at all. It was almost a total failure owing to the long drought.
 6812. What was the cost of your machinery, and where was it manufactured ? Machinery, freight, erection, and buildings, cost £24,000. The machinery was manufactured in Glasgow and Derby; the coolers and tanks in Mackay.
 6813. What is the cost of your annual overhaul for repairs ? From £400 to £500.

6814. What

6814. What wages are paid to European labourers outside of agriculture? There are very few men employed in this district outside of agriculture, but the Divisional Board men get 4s. a day and their keep. The Municipal Council men 7s. a day without keep. Ordinary men on cattle stations get from 20s. to 18 Feb, 1889. 25s. a week. W. T. Paget.

6815. What tropical productions other than sugar do you think can be grown in this district? Tobacco, coffee, maize, sweet potatoes, rice, and fruits, and I think all tropical productions, except vanilla, cinchona, and cocoa.

6816. What labour would be required to render their growth profitable? Without a doubt, very cheap and reliable coloured labour.

6817. Have you grown any tropical produce besides sugar cane at Nindaroo? Yes; tobacco and maize for some years.

6818. What has been the average yield of maize? Our average yield has been 21 bushels per acre.

6819. Have you grown more than one crop in the year? Yes; when the seasons permitted we used to grow two crops.

6820. Would the average return be the same in both instances? Yes; 21 bushels per acre is averaging our crops. Tobacco we grew for four years and we averaged about 12 cwt. per acre.

6821. What did you get per pound for it? In those days the price ranged from 6d. to 1s. per lb.

6822. Did you sell it locally? Yes.

6823. Do you think it is a crop that could be profitably grown in this district? I do, with cheap labour.

6824. Can you, from your personal observation and knowledge, state the causes which, in your opinion, have brought about the present depression in the sugar industry? Yes; I have put down four causes. The 1st, I consider, is the uncertainty as to the future supply of cheap reliable labour; 2nd, the high cost of the introduction, &c., of kanakas—this labour now costs 2s. 6d. a day as against 1s. 6d. per day formerly; 3rd, having to compete with bounty-fed beetroot sugar grown by cheap European labour and cane sugars grown by cheap coloured labour; and 4th, the depression, in my opinion, has been intensified by unfavourable seasons for the past three years, a wet season in 1886 and two very dry seasons.

6825. Can you offer any suggestions by which the industry can be relieved from its depression? The markets and seasons being beyond control, except where irrigation can be used in dry seasons, I can only suggest that the continuance of kanaka labour be assured, and that steps be taken by the Government to reduce the cost of introduction. I have tried cheap European indentured labour to a large extent for the past two years for field and mill work and have found it an utter failure, except with a few picked men who were paid extra wages. I can also suggest reciprocity with the other colonies, which would mean a better net price for the product.

6826. Can you offer any suggestions for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing? I cannot offer any suggestions, the labour question being so uncertain in this colony. Could a constant supply of labour be secured, I should certainly advise my firm to put part of the scrub ridges on the estate under coffee.

6827. Have you seen coffee growing in this district? I have.

6828. And you think from what you have seen of it that the plant can be successfully grown here? I do, on the scrub ridges.

6829. As chairman of the Pioneer Divisional Board, you have been connected with the labour employed? Yes.

6830. Is it a stipulation that none but white labour is to be employed on Divisional Board works? There is no particular stipulation, but none but Europeans have been employed.

6831. Do you do the work by contract or day labour? Both. All suitable works are done by contract. Repairs and works that require a heavy plant are done by the Board.

6832. None but Europeans are employed? Most decidedly not.

6833. *By Mr. King:* It has been in evidence before the Commission that the farmers have suffered very much from planters repudiating agreements made to purchase cane. Have you known of any such instances? I have not.

6834. Have you known of any case in which an agreement has been set on one side owing to a manager having exceeded his authority or anything of that kind? I have heard of such a case. One case only.

6835. What case was that? It was the Farleigh plantation.

6836. How did it come to pass? I can only say that I heard that the manager of the plantation had exceeded his powers, and had made agreements for longer terms than he was empowered to do.

6837. Did the proprietors then refuse to take the cane which had been grown as a result of the agreement? No; they did not. I understand that they took it at the market price.

6838. You do not know very much about it? No; personally I cannot say I know very much about it.

6839. *By Mr. Cowley:* Is your machinery of the best description? Yes.

6840. Do you work it as economically as you can and avoid all waste? Most decidedly.

6841. You have all the appliances for extracting the greatest amount of juice? Yes; I have not a triple effect, but I have steam evaporators.

6842. You work with a minimum of waste? Yes; most decidedly.

6843. What price do you pay the farmers for their cane? We pay 10s. a ton delivered.

6844. What have you paid previously? Fourteen shillings a ton.

6845. Do you get as much as you want at the present price? No.

6846. Would you take more? Yes; in 1883 to 1885 we paid away £9,000 for cane. In the year 1888 we paid away £78 15s. The reason the farmers give me for not growing cane is that coloured labour is scarce and dear and cane low in price.

6847. *By the Chairman:* Have you any idea of what revenue the plantations contribute to the Pioneer Divisional Board? Yes. In 1883 the total valuations were £48,728, of which the plantations were valued at £24,794; in 1884 the total valuations were £69,767, of which the plantations were valued at £34,408; in 1885, £63,140 was the total valuation and the plantations £29,909; in 1886 the total valuations were £62,631 and the plantations £27,347; in 1887, £63,171 were the total valuations and the plantations £26,630; and in 1888 the total valuations were £52,700 and the plantations £15,187. The lowness of the valuation of the plantations in 1888 is due to the fact that on appeal on the valuation of the land only the valuations were reduced from 20 to 75 per cent, and the actual reductions, on appeal, all round amounted to 40 per cent.

JOHN

JOHN MARCUS COSTELLO examined:

J. M. Costello. 6848. *By the Chairman:* You are a selector living in this district? I am. I have been here for many years.

18 Feb., 1889. 6849. What is the extent of your holding? 642½ acres.

6850. How many acres have you under cultivation? About ten acres under coffee.

6851. Have you had any experience in the cultivation of sugar cane? I have been for seven years managing in this district, at Branscombe, Meadowlands, and Alexandra.

6852. Are you growing cane now? No; I am not. The price offered was so low that last season I cut down the cane, and gave it to the cattle and horses.

6853. What do you mean when you say the price was so low? 5s. a ton on the ground.

6854. Was that all that you were offered for it? That was all. Last year the cane did not look so fresh, but I did not expect to be paid for any that was not good sound cane. The cane became rather dry owing to the climate and the grubs. All the cane in the district was more or less bad owing to the drought.

6855. How long have you been growing coffee in this district? For eight years.

6856. What has been your average return per acre? That is a difficult question to answer accurately; —3 cwt. an acre would be rather a high average. Coffee grows well if heavy rain does not set in before the blossom sets. I have had small pieces that would average far and away more, but the average would be about 3 cwt.

6857. What would be the value of 1 cwt. of coffee when dried? I was offered for it from three to four guineas. When I started this industry I had to gain my experience. I had the coffee for a long time on hand. I tried some of the large storekeepers in town, and they were rather surprised that the industry was started. They said that the quantity of beans was so small that they could not give me an order, and I was at a loss to know what to do with it. I tried down South, and then I thought I would commence manufacturing it. I asked the storekeepers whether, if I turned out a first-class article they would take it, and they agreed to do so. I cannot find a market outside of Mackay. Some was sent to Townsville, and I saw a copy of a letter from Aplin, Brown, and Co. speaking highly of the coffee. I tried to find a market in Rockhampton, but there seems to be a prejudice against it.

6858. You have never gone about the large towns yourself stating that you had gone into the industry and soliciting orders? No; but Mr. Reid forwarded some samples.

6859. Have you a coffee mill and all the appliances for grinding coffee? Yes.

6860. And for making a really good and marketable article? Yes; first-class.

6861. Have you never tried the city of Brisbane? Some few people know of it in Brisbane, and it has been highly approved of. They say there is nothing in the market to equal it.

6862. Do you use chicory in the manufactured article? Yes; I have done so on the advice of Ceylon men. A good many interviewed me and were favourably impressed. The last Ceylon planter who was here told me that he would be sorry to go into the cultivation of coffee here. He thought from the appearance of the trees that the district was not quite suitable. The flavour of my coffee is very much superior to the imported article.

6863. What capital have you invested altogether in your selection? Over £2,000.

6864. Have you made interest on the money invested? No. At the end of 1887 between eight and nine acres of young coffee had died out for want of labour. Some of the old coffee trees now in cultivation are looking rather sickly, and a good many have died out.

6865. Do you find the growing of coffee profitable? I grew it on a very small scale to supply the local market, but if I attempted to grow it on a large scale it might remain on my hands. The people seem to be prejudiced against it. They admit it is a good article, but do not feel inclined to patronise it. I have heard there are such things as "rings," and if they make up their minds to exclude an article they will do so.

6866. Then none of your land is at present under sugar? The ratoons are coming on, but I do not intend to do anything with them.

6867. *By Mr. Cowley:* Was the crop of cane you were offered 5s. a ton for a poor crop, or was it well cleaned and cultivated? It was like the generality of the cane in the district. It was not cleaned or looked after at all. A planter asked me if I would sell it for plants, and then he allowed it to run on for such a length of time that it was then too late, and when it came to the crushing season I was asked if I would dispose of it.

6868. How far would the purchaser have had to cart it? From where I live to Habana Mill, not more than about a mile.

6869. What were you offered for it delivered? I told him I could not deliver it. I think he said at first that he would give 10s. delivered.

6870. Have you always sold all the coffee you ever made? No; I have coffee now not sold.

6871. *By the Chairman:* How much have you really manufactured at a time? I never manufacture unless I get an order. If Marsh and Webster tell me that they want 2 cwt. of coffee this week I manufacture it.

6872. What price do you charge for it wholesale? £9 16s. per cwt., with 2½ per cent. discount for cash. I can make a cheaper coffee if I adulterate it in the way others do, but I want to make a first-class article. I could put a lot of chicory in it, and sell it cheaper.

6873. In your opinion the cultivation of coffee cannot be carried on successfully without coloured labour? I am certain of it.

6874. The price you receive would not warrant you in employing white labour? No; I would sooner abandon the industry. I and my two sons have worked at it, and if I had to pay white labour it would not pay. One great difficulty we have to contend with is getting suitable labour if we want to experimentalise.

JOHN TEMPLE examined:

J. Temple. 6875. *By the Chairman:* You are a farmer? Yes. I reside at Eton. I have been a shareholder in the central mill, but owing to internal squabbles I was obliged to secede from it. I have 400 acres of beautiful rich arable land, and I wished to put some under sugar cane. I took up shares, but owing to the squabbles —

6876. We

6876. We cannot enter into complaints against the company? Yes; but if I had a tramroad I could grow cane. J. Temple.
6877. We are hereto inquire into the causes of the depression in the sugar industry, and obtain suggestions for its improvement. We cannot enter into personal quarrels? I have no quarrels. I want to grow cane for the company and become a shareholder, and if I have a tramway I can get along. 18 Feb., 1889.
6878. *By Mr. King:* Have you grown any sugar cane? I have been on the plantations but have not grown sugar, because I had no mill near my land.
6879. If you have been a shareholder in the company you must have undertaken to grow cane? I went out of the company.
6880. You did not mortgage your property to the company? No.
6881. *By Mr. Cowley:* The reason you seceded was on account of the distance you were away from the mill? Yes; it would not pay me to cart my cane seven miles.

EDMUND STANSFIELD RAWSON examined:

6882. *By the Chairman:* You are at present the representative of the North Queensland Sugar Estate Company, Limited? I am. E. S. Rawson.
6883. Will you kindly state why the company is in its present condition? Inability to start work in consequence of want of labour. The applicants that we had for the land desired us to guarantee labour for the term of the leases, which we could not do. 18 Feb., 1889.
6884. How many acres has the company altogether? 11,500.
6885. You produce a pamphlet which contains the proposals on which the company were prepared to lease land? Yes. [*Pamphlet handed in.*]
6886. In answer to that proposal did you get any applications? Yes, we did, but we were asked to guarantee the labour, which we could not do.
6887. Practically up to the present time the company has taken no steps at all in the direction of cultivation? None whatever.
6888. *By Mr. Cowley:* I see one of your conditions, No. 40, is that you are prepared to give a fixed rate of 12s. 6d. a ton for cane delivered at the company's mill—are you still prepared to give that? That I could not say without reference to our London board. The company is in liquidation, and the estate is to be sold, if possible. The people at home are tired of waiting. I have no doubt that if there was any permanency of the labour, or any prospect of men making a living by cultivating sugar cane, we might go on. It took me twelve months to work up this company and then I failed over it.
6889. Does the railway run through the estate? Yes, through the major portion of it. It runs through about 3,500 acres of the estate.

FRANK CHARLES HORNBOOK examined:

6890. *By the Chairman:* You are Polynesian Inspector for this district? Yes. F. C. Hornbrook.
6891. What is the total number of Polynesians in the district of Mackay at the present time? 2,155; that is as near as I can get to the number. A good many go away on their own account. There were 2,243, and 105 of those have gone away. A good many others have gone away to Bowen and Cairns. 18 Feb., 1889.
6892. What is the general condition of the health of the men in this district? It is not bad; I brought with me a hospital book that I keep here. [*Book produced.*] It has only been started this year; I have now to go to the hospital every week. At the end of the year there were forty-six in the hospital remaining over from the previous year, and the average is ten a week. Up to the present time this year there have been 110 in the hospital, and out of that number six have died. The ten a week would represent about 500 a year, and of the 2,000 boys in the district about one-fourth of them go to the hospital. As far as I see, of those admitted to the hospital about 5 or 6 per cent. die.
6893. What have these six deaths occurred from? Ordinary sickness, such as fever. There have been since I have been here two murders and a death from snake bite.
6894. *By Mr. King:* Do not some patients come into the hospital over and over again? Very often. One has been in the hospital since the 1st January, 1888, and on the 2nd January, 1889, she was still there. That is a case of syphilis, and she will have to remain there until she dies. There are several others nearly as bad who have been there a very long time.
6895. *By the Chairman:* You say you have received instructions to go to the plantations once a week? Not to the plantations—to the hospital. I received instructions to visit the hospital every week and keep this book. It has been done in the other districts, but Mackay for some reason has been omitted.
6896. You keep a return of all the patients admitted to the hospital? Yes; I go every Wednesday. I have to send a copy of this record to Brisbane, and my last visit was on the thirteenth of the month.
6897. Do you pay regular visits to the plantations? Whenever I have nothing in the office to keep me I go out there. Lately I have been paying regular visits, because I have had to witness the six-monthly payments.
6898. Do you inquire into the condition of the islanders generally? Yes; certainly. Of course, I have to go whenever I have nothing in the office to detain me. It is part of my duty to visit the plantations. Sometimes I have had to go out on special occasions when boys come in and complain.
6899. *By Mr. Cowley:* Have you an assistant-inspector? Yes.
6900. Does he visit the plantations? Yes; occasionally. If I am unable to go, and there is anything pressing, then he goes. I commenced work here on the 1st December, and I have been to them all once and several of them three or four times as occasion requires.
6901. *By Mr. King:* Do you have any complaints made of ill-treatment? I have had one complaint of assault since I have been here, and two complaints of bad food. One was at Farleigh. I went out there, and in that case it was a complaint of insufficiency of food. I got there at the time they were serving out the food, and saw what the complaint was. The man in charge said they always had what the law allowed them, but I discovered the cause. The man who was serving out the food was a kanaka himself, and he had his fancy men or favourites. Some had to go hungry, while others got more than their share. Since then I recommended the removal of that man. Another case was from the River Estate. A boy brought in a bottle of tea, three small sweet potatoes, and a piece of bread. Certainly it was not up to much,

- F. C. Hornbrook.
18 Feb., 1889.
- much, and I wrote out to Mr. Archer telling him of the complaint. I had been out there once, and the boys seemed to be pretty well treated, but it appeared that the white cook had been on the drunk at Christmas, and the kanakas had to cook for themselves. I asked the boys if the food was like that all the time and they said "No." The other complaint was one of assault. The boy told me that he and his companion had been struck by the overseer. I wrote out and told the manager to send the overseer in to me. I had the two boys in also, and it appeared that one had been very cheeky, but I told the overseer that that was no reason why he should strike him. The overseer had been there some time, and the manager spoke very well of him. I told the overseer that if I heard any more complaints I should have to summon him. There have also been two murders since I have been here.
6902. *By the Chairman*: Are all the hospitals on the plantations in charge of thoroughly qualified dispensers? I do not think so. They have some rather rough doctors on the plantations.
6903. Is it not a condition that they shall have thoroughly qualified persons there? No; there is nothing in the Act to that effect. The Act says that the boys are to be sent to the hospital. Of course, there are many cases in which a dose of oil only is needed, but there are some dispensers that I would not care to trust very much. The planters are very good in sending the boys to the hospital. I have seen boys in the plantation sick wards, but I have never seen one that I thought it necessary to tell the planter to send to the hospital. The boys come into the hospital themselves from the plantations that are at all handy to it.
6904. Have you prepared a return of the Polynesians on the different plantations? Yes. [See Appendix R.]

CHARLES CLAUDIUS INNES, examined:

- G. C. Innes.
18 Feb., 1889.
6905. *By the Chairman*: You are land agent for this district? Yes; and at present acting commissioner for the district of Mackay.
6906. Are you able to state the area of land selected, forfeited, and made freehold in the Mackay land agent's district? Yes. The selections under the Act of 1868 made freehold amounted to 34,071 acres; conditional selections taken up under the Act of 1876, 280,000 acres; homestead selections taken up, 33,600 acres; volunteer land orders, 400 acres; conditional selections under the Act of 1876 not yet made freehold, 12,170 acres; conditional selections forfeited, 26,773 acres; homestead selections not yet made freehold, 12,160 acres; agricultural farms selected under the Act of 1854, 22,499 acres; forfeited under the same Act, 1,280 acres; approximate area under cultivation, Act of 1876, 200,000 acres. Then there is a statement here that the great proportion of that area is under cultivation other than by sugar cane. I may explain that that information was given at the last moment, because I had no official facts to give it upon. I gave it from my knowledge of the selections, and I am pretty well certain that the bulk of it is not under cane. The area under cane is a matter of guess. I could not pledge myself to the accuracy of it, though I should scarcely think the area could be more than 8,000 acres under cane in this district. The approximate area of selections cultivated under the Act of 1884 is 450 acres; the approximate area of selections under the Acts of 1876 and 1868, made freehold and not now occupied, is 140,000 acres.*
6907. Is there much land available for selection in the district now? Yes; there is a very large amount of land available.
6908. Where is it situated? There is nothing within a radius of twenty-five miles—not a single block. The land is closely selected within twenty-five miles of the town, with the exception of a few reserves that are not open to selection.
6909. Then if they were selected the selectors would have had the difficulty to contend with of having no means of transit? Yes; that is practically the means of stopping selection now.
6910. You are not doing much in the land office now? Very little just now. There have been 22,000 acres selected since 1885. Of course, we have been over-selected for some time. For instance, men of means have taken up large blocks of land in far-out places, and the moment they have done so a number of selectors have congregated round them in the hopes of something being done. You can see by the large number of forfeitures that one by one they have given up the selections. At present there is no demand unless now and again a stranger comes here, and a piece of choice land is thrown open, which is taken up.

WEDNESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY, 1889.

ROCKHAMPTON DISTRICT.
(At the Criterion Hotel.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.
A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

JOHN ALEXANDER GAVIN examined:

- J. A. Gavin.
20 Feb., 1889.
6911. *By the Chairman*: You are the secretary of the Yeppoon Sugar Company? The late secretary, but now the liquidator of the Yeppoon Sugar Company, Limited.
6912. How long were you secretary to the company? Since 1886.
6913. What is the total area of the land held by the company? 2,000 acres.
6914. How much is under cultivation by sugar? Somewhere about 700 acres now.

6915. When

* NOTE.—Attention was drawn by The Chairman to the statement of the Witness that 200,000 acres were under cultivation and the great portion of it other than by sugar cane, and also that 8,000 acres only were under sugar cane; but he adhered to the correctness of his figures.

J. A. Gavin.

20 Feb., 1889.

6915. When did you have a crushing last? We finished about the month of November of last year.
6916. What quantity of cane did you crush then? We did not weigh the cane.
6917. How many acres did you crush? 475 acres.
6918. What was the yield of sugar? About 330 tons.
6919. What is the total capital invested in the company? The total capital of the company is £40,000, of which £24,000 was subscribed. The balance was overdraft advanced by the Bank of New South Wales. There has been £14,000 expended on the plantation.
6920. What was your average yearly expenditure? I can give you up to the 31st December, 1887—£5,394 13s. Beyond that, there was £2,633 for Polynesian labour account.
6921. *By Mr. King*: That is for the introduction? Yes; the introduction of the boys. The total expenditure for the year 1887 was £10,137 10s.
6922. *By the Chairman*: What interest did the plantation return on the capital invested? Well, we paid at the rate of about £1,500 a year to the Bank of New South Wales as overdraft. No interest, but £1,500 a year paid to the bank.
6923. What labour was employed at the plantation? There were eighty black boys and the usual engineer, overseer, manager, and ploughmen.
6924. *By Mr. King*: How many ploughmen? I could not say exactly. During the crushing season of course there were a great many white men employed. There were the manager, engineer, sugar boiler, kanaka overseer, and about five or six ploughmen.
6925. *By Mr. Cowley*: About ten white men were employed? Yes.
6926. *By the Chairman*: How long have the Polynesians been employed on the plantation? Since the formation of the company in 1885.
6927. Was the company formed upon the understanding that Polynesians would be employed, or upon the idea that white labour could be used? It was formed at the time that black labour was being employed elsewhere, and the company were able to get kanakas.
6928. Have the shareholders resolved to continue the operations of the plantation? No, they have resolved to wind up owing to the overdraft. The bank cannot carry them on. The overdraft is over £16,000, and the bank has foreclosed. The guarantors decided not to carry on any further liability, so the shareholders were forced to wind up.
6929. *By Mr. King*: What was the cost of the machinery, erected? £6,840.
6930. What quality of sugar did you make? Very good quality. First, second, third and fourth sugars.
6931. Brown or white? White sugar. It realised about top price. This year we have sold it as high as £25.
6932. Was any attempt made to work this company with white labour? One year we were short of boys, and had to work with white labour. We had only twenty or thirty boys, whereas the full complement ought to be at least 100. We have always been short.
6933. Can you say what was the result of the attempt to work with white labour? It was not at all satisfactory. I was changing men every week. Men went down and came back the same week.
6934. What wages were you giving? £1 and 25s. with rations.
6935. Could you get as many men as you wanted at that rate? We had a difficulty in getting them and those that were sent down were always coming back.
6936. Why did they come back? I suppose they did not like the work.
6937. Did they say why they came back—were they dismissed or did they leave of their own accord? A great many left of their own accord and a great many were dismissed for incompetency.
6938. Did these men give any reason for leaving? In all probability. I never saw them. I have no authentic information why they left, but I believe they did not like the work.
6939. Is the land suited for growing sugar cane? Yes, very suitable. It has always turned off a very good average. In fact, this year, with the drought, we have had a higher average than Mackay.
6940. To what cause do you attribute the failure of the company? One of the causes is, of course, the shortness of capital. If the full £40,000 had been subscribed there would have been a saving of interest, and besides the directors guaranteeing as bondsmen they have had to become guarantees for the working of the place to the extent of £4,000 or £5,000. The directors themselves have no security whatever, but simply depend upon the crop to pay the working expenses.
6941. What interest was the company paying to the bank? Sometimes 9 per cent. and sometimes 8 per cent.
6942. If the seasons had been more favourable, do you think you might have carried on? This year, most decidedly. We would have been able to carry on if we had had anything like a fair season.
6943. Then the cause of the failure of the company, in your opinion, has been partly bad seasons and partly having to pay interest on borrowed money? Yes, partly that.
6944. *By Mr. Cowley*: What is the capacity of the mill? It is said to be able to turn out from 1,000 to 1,500 tons per annum.
6945. Are you positive as to the cost being £6,000 erected? Yes, quite positive. That is all it cost.
6946. What does it consist of? It is only a vacuum pan. It was bought from A. and W. Smith and Co., and erected by Bruby. I could show you his report on it as compared with some of the mills on the Burdekin.
6947. What is the size of the rollers? I could not say.
6948. What is the largest amount of sugar you ever made? 500 tons, the year before last.
6949. How many months did it take to make that? We started in June and we finished before December.
6950. Did you work continuously? No, we had to stop several times for want of water and labour.
6951. Do you think that one cause of the failure is the excessive amount you have had to pay for white men's wages? Well, that certainly has been a drawback.
6952. Do you think that is the great factor in the failure—I am referring now more especially to the seasons when you had no kanakas? If we had had to find white labour altogether, we could not have carried on at all.

- J. A. Gavin. 6953. One season you had to employ a great many white men? Exactly, and if we had had kanakas that year, the 500 tons of sugar would have covered our working expenses and left a balance. As it was we were no better off with the 500 tons than with 300. Since we have started we have increased our crops greatly.
6954. Have you had any experience in the working of a plantation? None.
6955. You cannot say whether white men have cut and trashed? I know they did do it. I have seen them working with the horses and loading up cane, &c.
6956. *By the Chairman*: How long has the manager been in his present position? For two years. He used to manage The Cellars at Mackay.
6957. Have you always had a good price for your sugars? We have never been lower than £16 or £18. We have always averaged that. Last year we averaged about £18. This year we will average £20.
6958. Then the low price of sugar in other countries has not affected you? We have always been getting a fair price since the company started. When we first started the price was £30, and it has gradually come down to £17.
6959. Has that not had something to do with your non-success? If we had got £30 a ton for our sugar we probably would have been very well off.
6960. So that the failure is not attributable to one cause only? No; to a variety of causes. Getting £18 a ton and with suitable labour, I am perfectly satisfied to carry on the plantation. An average of £18 a ton would pay.
6961. Then why do not the present directors continue it? They are not at all disposed to do so. Half-a-dozen of them have now guaranteed £16,000, and they will drop it now. One gentleman says: "I am prepared to pay in my £500 or £1,500 and drop it."
6962. *By Mr. King*: In order to carry on you would have to increase your debt? Yes.
6963. And the directors who guaranteed the £16,000 are not willing to go any further? No. The directors are not the guarantors for the £16,000. We had another guarantee account for £5,000 which the crop was to cover. The guarantors had a lien over the whole thing, and they gave the directors a lien over the crops to cover the £5,000.
6964. That is the reason why the company is being wound-up—that the guarantors object to increase their guarantee? Exactly.
6965. *By the Chairman*: The property is to be sold by auction to-morrow? Yes.
6966. In the event of a purchaser not being found for it, what action is to be taken? It is the property of the guarantors and they will have to buy my equity, and they will have to do the best they can. They have to find £16,000.
6967. Then you are at present absolutely representing the bank? No; I am representing the company. I am trying to realise on the property to get it into safe hands. I have carried it on myself for a month.
6968. In the event of the property not being sold, is the bank likely to carry it on? No; not at all likely.
6969. What is to become of the eighty islanders? They will be transferred somewhere else or sent home. Their time has to run up to October, 1890. I can show in figures that at the price those people are prepared to take for the property it would be a really good thing, but there is a doubt about the labour. Without the labour it is worth nothing. I am responsible for the boys, and the bondsmen are responsible for them. I was going to try and remove them, but of course it would damage the company's interests if they were removed, and I therefore allowed them to stop on in the hope of making a sale; but if I removed the boys to-morrow the property is not worth £1, and we have put improvements on it to the extent of £20,000.
6970. Does the cane ever suffer from frost here? No; it has never been attacked. We have the mountains right on the west, and we are open to the sea.
6971. Has the cane ever been attacked by grub or rust? No; nothing of the kind has ever attacked the cane. It had a very severe test last February. We had 30 inches of rain in twenty-four hours.
6972. *By Mr. Couley*: When you made 500 tons of sugar how many acres did you crush? About 475 acres. In connection with the islanders we have one difficulty. We are compelled to send the boys home, but they are not compelled to go. We have to pay the £5 return passage money to the Government, and if the boys go elsewhere and do not re-engage we have a difficulty in getting the money back again. There are 200 boys now in the scrub who are working for themselves, and they are not free boys. We are compelled to send them home, and they do not go. There they are in the scrub, cutting timber and doing other work, and yet we are not allowed to use them when other people are.
6973. Do you suggest that the £5 return passage money should be collected by the Government? Yes; and not leave it to the previous employer to find out where the boy is. I got a boy up from Bundaberg—from Mr. Palmer's plantation. I sent to him for some boys, and he sent me three, and I paid him £5 for each for the return passage money. They would only engage for six months, and I gave as high as 12s. a week. One of these boys has gone back after six months. He is down at Bundaberg now. I made inquiries through the inspector, who says the boy has gone home, but it is within my knowledge that he has kept up a correspondence with one of the plantations, and he is still at Palmer's plantation, and my £5 has gone.
6974. *By Mr. King*: With regard to the Polynesians working in the scrub does not the inspector look after them and summon any person who employs them without agreement? If there is no complaint made it is difficult to do so; besides, it is so difficult to find the boys; most of them are working for themselves. They have horses and drays of their own. That is where the unfairness of the Act comes in. If the boys were actually compelled to go home it would be fair on both sides, but now they are allowed to stop, and the very men to cry out about black labour are the men who are using them on the sly.
6975. Then some of the whites are employing them? There is no doubt of it.
6976. Do you not know that they are liable to a penalty? Yes; I know that if I reported them they are liable to a penalty, but that is an unpleasant thing to do.
6977. Have there been any prosecutions in Rockhampton? Yes.
6978. With what result? That the men were fined, and the thing is done with.
6979. How many farmers are growing cane near Yeppoon? I think there are four, but there may be more.

6980. Have

6980. Have you bought any cane from them? Yes; we always bought and paid so much per hundred gallons for the juice. J. A. Garin.
6981. Did you buy any last year? Yes. 20 Feb., 1889
6982. How much? I could not say from memory.
6983. *By Mr. Cowley*: What do you pay per hundred gallons? I cannot say just now.
6984. *By Mr. King*: Were the farmers satisfied with the price? They were not satisfied last year, and we gave them 1s. more than they were getting at Bundaberg. We got the information from Mr. Cran what he was paying, and we gave them 1s. a hundred gallons more. They served us with a notice that unless they got 1s. more than that, they would not grow cane.
6985. Could you have afforded to give them any more? No; I do not think we could.
6986. *By the Chairman*: Did the farmers grow cane with their own labour? They have only small farms, but some of them have got kanaka boys.

THOMAS KELLY examined:

6987. *By the Chairman*: You are chairman of the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce? Yes. T. Kelly.
6988. You have been chairman of the Yeppoon Sugar Company? Yes; for twelve months. 20 Feb., 1889.
6989. Can you inform us why the company is at present in liquidation? The principal cause was the bad season last year. Had it not been for that we should have carried on this year. We had a yield of about 300 tons of sugar when we should have had 600 tons.
6990. Had all the seasons in previous years been satisfactory to the company? The previous season was a very good one. We had some 500 tons of sugar.
6991. *By Mr. King*: How many crushings have you had at Yeppoon? Three or four.
6992. Did the proceeds of the crop in any year exceed the working expenses? Yes; the year before last—in 1887.
6993. What amount of profit did you make over and above expenses? I could not say exactly from memory what the profits were.
6994. Do you recollect what it amounted to on the capital invested—was it 5 per cent.? I do not recollect. The secretary could give the information.
6995. Did you ever pay a dividend? No.
6996. What was the amount of your liabilities at the time you got the company into working order? I think about £15,000. I have only been connected with the company for two years.
6997. Did you reduce that amount, or did you increase it by working? It is increased by the interest, owing now, but the principal sum was not increased.
6998. Then if the whole of the capital of the company had been subscribed you would have been able to carry on? Yes; carry on well.
6999. In your opinion the causes of failure were bad seasons, and the company having liabilities on account of borrowed capital? Yes; they had not sufficient capital to work upon. In fact we have only been financing for the last two years. The directors have had to carry on the work by giving their bond for the working expenses. The first year we had no security whatever, but this year we have been secured by the crop.
7000. *By the Chairman*: You are one of the guarantors? I am one of the guarantors of the working expenses of the Company, but not one of the guarantors of the £15,000. There are two classes of guarantors. Several gentlemen are guarantors for the capital, and last year the directors refused to carry on unless they were protected by lien over the crop, and we were given a lien over the crop. The previous year the directors found the money to work the place, and during last year we had a lien over the crop which became our property, and might meet all liabilities. I hope we will not be called upon to pay very much.
7001. *By Mr. Cowley*: Will the amount that the crop will realise this year pay you? We hope it will. We have not sold all the sugar yet.
7002. Why did you not call up the uncalled capital? We tried to do so but could not. The shareholders would not subscribe.
7003. Can you tell us anything about the general working of the place? Not much.
7004. Do you know anything about the capacity of the mill? No; I do not.
7005. Do you know whether the labour has been satisfactory? The labour has been satisfactory, but I do not know the capacity of the mill.
7006. *By the Chairman*: The advertisement says that the mill is capable of turning out 1,500 tons of sugar? It is fully equal to that, there is no doubt. It is a very fine plant. In fact when I first saw it I thought they had spent a great deal more money than necessary.
7007. *By Mr. King*: Do you know what the machinery cost erected? I do not know.
7008. *By the Chairman*: Have the members of the Chamber of Commerce discussed the question of the sugar industry? No.
7009. You are aware that it was at the request of the Chamber of Commerce that we received a telegram from the Chief Secretary asking us to visit Rockhampton? Yes, the members expressed the wish that I should telegraph to Mr. Pattison, asking that you might be requested to call in here.
7010. What was your object? We wanted to have the Yeppoon Sugar Plantation included in the inquiry.
7011. Then the Chamber of Commerce as a body are not prepared to offer any suggestions by which the sugar industry of Rockhampton can be improved? No. I do not think so.
7012. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you know anything of the Pandora Estate? No, except that it was wound up two or three years back.
7013. *By Mr. King*: What was the cause of the failure of that estate? I believe insufficient capital and bad seasons.
7014. They were working on borrowed capital the same as you were? I think so.

THURSDAY,

THURSDAY, 21 FEBRUARY, 1889.

ROCKHAMPTON DISTRICT.

(At the Criterion Hotel.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

VIVIAN VOSS examined:

V. VOSS.
21 Feb., 1889.

7015. *By the Chairman*: You are a duly qualified medical practitioner? Yes.

7016. You are medical officer at Rockhampton and medical officer to the Polynicians? Yes; and Polynesian inspector.

7017. How long have you held the latter office? For nearly two years now.

7018. How many Polynicians are there in this district under your inspection? About 200.

7019. Can you state where they are principally employed? They are employed by the Yeppoon Company.

7020. The number employed there we discover to be eighty; can you state where the others are? I may have given too great a number. I thought there were a larger number.

7021. Do you know of any others in this district besides the company who are employing Polynicians? Mr. Atherton has two.

7022. What is he? He is a selector, and employs them in the cultivation of fruits.

7023. Is he the only employer? He is the only other registered employer.

7024. You have only accounted for eighty-two? I may have overstated the number, but I am sure there are quite fifty besides that in the district.

7025. Can you tell us what they are doing? Some of them are employed cutting wood on the other side of the river on their own behalf and for their countrymen. I have known of two instances where they were employed by white men for that purpose, and of two others who were employed as general labourers. As soon as it came to my knowledge notice was served that their employment was illegal, and the men were at once dismissed.

7026. *By Mr. Cowley*: In all instances? In all four instances.7027. *By the Chairman*: Has it come to your knowledge, as Polynesian inspector, that there are time-expired boys now in the district with horses and drays of their own, who compete with the European population in cutting timber and firewood? I know that it is so; but it has not been reported to me officially. I know of it privately.

7028. Can you state what number of them are doing this? No; I cannot.

7029. Would the number be under or over fifty? Under fifty, I think.

7030. Where do they principally reside? In the scrub, and about North Rockhampton.

7031. Has it come to your knowledge also that some of the boys have married European women? Yes.

7032. Where are they residing? In North Rockhampton. Some are married to their own native women who came with them from the islands.

7033. These Polynicians who are working in the way you have described are entirely out of your control and jurisdiction? They are not supposed to be; but I do not see how we can get hold of them. I am advised by the police magistrate that it is not possible to interfere with them if they cut wood on their own account.

7034. Do you know whether licenses are issued to them by the land office for cutting firewood under the timber regulations? I do not know.

7035. But you do know of your own knowledge that they have cut firewood and sold it? Yes; I have been told so by the men themselves.

7036. Off Crown lands? I cannot say.

7037. *By Mr. King*: Have these boys who are working on their own account got exemption tickets? Some have, but not all.7038. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you keep a Polynesian register, showing how and where the islanders are employed? Yes; of the boys under registered agreement.

7039. What is the total number registered? There are seventy-eight registered as being employed by the Yeppoon Sugar Company, and two by Mr. Atherton. I find that there are no other Pacific Islanders employed under registered agreement in this district.

7040. Do you make it your duty to find out how the fifty islanders you have spoken of are employed? I do not see what means I have of finding out except by going round and speaking to them.

7041. Have you ever inspected them and reported on the matter to your chief? We report every year how many there are walking about the district. I have also asked what steps I should take to try and prevent such employment, and was told that in any case where I could obtain evidence I was to prosecute; but it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain the necessary evidence to secure a conviction.

7042. Then the head of the department in Brisbane is thoroughly aware of the state of things—that there are fifty men cutting firewood? I did not say that fifty men were employed in cutting firewood; but I reported that there were men cutting firewood.

7043. Did you not prosecute in the four cases you quoted—for employing labour contrary to the Act? No. One case I reported was that of Mr. P. F. MacDonald of Yaamba. I was instructed to inform him that such employment was illegal, and he dismissed the boy.

7044. Then you have prosecuted in no instance? No. In two out of the four cases I should not have been able to obtain evidence, and I only knew of the fourth case by accidentally visiting the house. I do not think I should carry my duties of inspection into a private house.

7045. How many islanders do you know of who are married to white women? I think I can remember three or four at the present time.

7046. *By*

7046. *By the Chairman*: When you say that you reported this matter to the head of your department, do you mean the Colonial Secretary, or the officer in charge of the Polynesian Department? The officer in charge. There is an annual return made of the islanders in our district. We can only give the average. V. Voss.
21 Feb., 1889.

7047. You do not communicate direct with the Colonial Secretary? No.

7048. *By Mr. Cowley*: If you actually know of men who are employed on their own account, you do not put those men down as walking about? It is a form that the return is made in. I cannot say that I know particular individuals. I know by coming across them that they are so employed, but I could not go straight from here and find any particular man.

7049. You have never had instructions from the head of the department to try and find out how many of these men are employed? I state, as near as I am able, the number walking about.

7050. You have never had instructions to find out for a fact the exact number? I do not suppose I should require more definite instructions—I do not know that I quite follow you.

7051. You say they are aware down below in Brisbane that these men are cutting firewood? I do not know that.

7052. Don't you think it would be your duty to bring it under notice? You see it is a large percentage, fifty out of 150 to be employed in other work than tropical agriculture. Don't you think it your duty, as inspector, to bring that fact directly under the notice of your chief? I say there are fifty men about the district who are not under registered agreements. I do not say there are fifty engaged in cutting wood.

7053. How many men have actually come under your notice as being engaged in cutting firewood—you say some have told you—how many have told you? There were four men before the police court concerning a dispute about cutting wood and they admitted it. I think I could say a dozen.

7054. You are certain of a dozen? I think I can say that number.

WILLIAM BROOME examined:

7055. *By the Chairman*: You were the original founder of the Yeppoon Sugar Plantation? Yes.

7056. You selected the land under the Land Act of 1876? The Acts of 1868 and 1876.

7057. For the purpose of sugar cultivation? No. It was taken up originally as cattle country.

7058. When did you commence sugar cultivation there? In 1878, on a small scale.

7059. How many acres did you first commence with? A small garden of about an acre as an experiment.

7060. Did that prove a success? Yes.

7061. Did you work it with white or coloured labour? Kanakas.

7062. Then you extended your operations? Yes.

7063. How many acres did you eventually bring under cultivation? I had six acres of cane when the company was formed.

7064. Were you satisfied from your experiment that sugar cultivation would prove a success there? Yes.

7065. Were you a shareholder of the company as established then? Yes; I took the whole of the value of the land in shares.

7066. Are you still a shareholder? Yes; the company is in liquidation now, but I have held the shares all through.

7067. You have still a large interest in the plantation? Yes.

7068. What in your opinion are the causes of its failure? The immediate cause is want of capital. We have not capital enough to carry us through any reverse.

7069. Then the labour question has nothing to do with the failure? Yes, everything, because the expenses have been incurred through the difficulty of getting labour.

7070. The limited capital that you had to work the plantation would not admit of the employment of European labour? Certainly not altogether. Not for all the work of the plantation.

7071. Did you make any experiment yourself with white labour only? Not when I started myself. After the company was formed, and when the first manager, Melish, came, we tried clearing with white labour, but it was too costly.

7072. When you were growing an acre of cane you had kanakas? I had three kanakas.

7073. Did you have them for other purposes than the cultivation of sugar cane? No; not at that time.

7074. Do you think the fall in price of sugar has had anything to do with the failure of the company? Of course, it has made matters worse.

7075. Then want of capital, the low price of sugar, and the price you have had to pay for labour are the causes which have led the company into liquidation? Yes.

7076. Can you give an opinion as to whether you think sugar plantations can be carried on successfully in this district with white labour only? I believe in time sugar cultivation could be carried on with white labour only, on the central mill system, but not until there is a large population. There are several settlers round the plantation growing cane who do very well out of it, but there is not enough population. In a few years time it may be better.

7077. How many acres have the selectors you speak of under cane at the present time? I think about sixty acres altogether.

7078. Do they grow that with white labour? They grow it with their own labour. They are men with sons who can do the work in their own time.

7079. Do you think it would be a public advantage that Yeppoon Plantation should be continued? Certainly. It has given a tremendous lot of work in the district, and where I employed three black men and a boy before there have been twenty white men employed ever since.

7080. You think if the mill is continued, in course of time a sufficient number of farmers will grow cane round it to justify it being worked on the central mill system? I feel quite sure of it.

7081. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say you took up the value of your land in shares? Yes.

7082. Did you ever sell any? No.

7083. Then you have been a great loser? Yes, I have been a great loser.

7084. What is the area of the place? 2,006 acres.

7085. What

- W. Broome. 7085. What is the largest number of white men you have employed there? One year when there was a difficulty in obtaining kanakas we employed fifty white men and boys on the place.
- 21 Feb., 1889. 7086. Did they work satisfactorily? No, not at all. There were constant complaints from the manager, and incessant changes. Men would not do the work, and said they could not do it.
7087. Was not the employment of those fifty white men a factor in the want of success? Yes.
7088. What was the rate of wages paid to the whites? They varied from 10s. to 30s. a week.
7089. From what you know of the place, and how it has been carried on, do you think you could have made it a success if you had had a plentiful supply of kanakas during that time? I am sure we could have done very much better.
7090. What price do you pay the selectors for their cane? Last year the price was 8s. a hundred gallons of juice; this year it was reduced to 7s.
7091. They delivered the cane at the mill? No, we cut the cane and carted it, and gave them that price.
7092. You do not weigh the cane? No, we had no weighbridge.
7093. You have no means of telling how many gallons you get per ton? No.
7094. Do you lease land to settlers or do they cultivate their own land? It is land they have bought, surrounding the mill.
7095. Have you ever tried to lease land to settlers? I have tried, but not with success.
7096. Have you had as much cane grown by the settlers as you could take? We could take a great deal more.
7097. You are open to take more? Yes.
7098. At the same price you paid last year? I hope it would be a better price. They grumble a great deal at 7s. I should like to see 8s. given regularly.
7099. You are sure you are not making a mistake about the 8s., and you cutting and carting the cane? No; they give us assistance in cutting it, but they have not drays enough to take it to the mill.
7100. Do you pay them for the assistance? No; they put what men they had on to cut and load cane.
7101. Do you do the whole of the carting? Practically, with just the small assistance they give us.
7102. What would the assistance amount to? Well, Kerr, for instance, has about 40 acres to crush, and he put on two or three men for a few days. The others would supply one man.
7103. *By the Chairman*: Do you think that the locality of the Yeppoon plantation is suitable for sugar cultivation? I think so after ten or twelve years' experience.
7104. Is there any considerable area of land equal in quality to Yeppoon plantation? Yes.
7105. Did you consult any authority when fixing the price of the juice at 8s. per hundred gallons? The manager did.
7106. He fixed the price at 8s., and subsequently at 7s.? Yes; subsequently it was reduced.
7107. The farmers were not satisfied with the 7s.? No; they were satisfied with the 8s., but grumbled at the 7s.
7108. Has that dissatisfaction led to the abandonment of sugar cultivation? They have not planted any more. They put in corn instead of cane this year.
7109. Have they all done that? Yes. One man has planted an acre or two more cane, but all the rest have abandoned it.
7110. *By Mr. Cowley*: What is the average distance you have to cart the cane to the mill? The furthest is a little over a mile.
7111. *By the Chairman*: Have you any idea of the cost of the machinery erected on the plantation? Between £6,000 and £7,000. £6,000 was the original cost, and there have been some additions.
7112. Do you mean the cost in Glasgow or erected on the ground? It cost a great deal more erected on the ground.
7113. *By Mr. King*: Can you not give the cost of the mill and machinery as they stand with the buildings? I think about £20,000. About £2,000 would be for buildings, and £18,000 for machinery and erection. I may state that I went home in 1884 and tried to get the balance of the capital subscribed taken up in London, but without success. It was rather a bad time in London just then.
7114. *By the Chairman*: Supposing the plantation is not sold to-day as advertised, what is likely to follow? Well, we unfortunates, about eight of us, who have guaranteed £16,000, will have to carry it on in the best way we can. Possibly, we may be called upon to pay the bank off at once, which is anything but pleasant.

HENRY ROSS examined:

- H. Ross. 7115. *By the Chairman*: You are manager of the Yeppoon sugar plantation? Yes.
- 21 Feb., 1889. 7116. How long have you held that position? Two years.
7117. What experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar cane? I commenced first of all about seventeen or eighteen years ago on a small scale on the Mary River. I went down there to grow cane and took up frosty country and had to give it up. I then had charge of the Arigwa mill for a couple of seasons. Afterwards for several years I was farming on the Mary River. For the last five years I have been in the sugar industry; three years in Mackay and two down here.
7118. What is the total area of the Yeppoon sugar plantation? Something like 2,000 acres.
7119. How many acres have you under cultivation with sugar cane? This year there will be 454 acres under cultivation with sugar cane and a few acres of potatoes.
7120. How many acres were under cane last year? 429 acres.
7121. What quantity of cane did you take off the land? I cannot say. We had no scales.
7122. How many tons of sugar did you realise from your crushing last year? 337 tons.
7123. How much molasses? About 10,500 gallons, or an average of about 35 gallons to the ton of sugar.
7124. What did you do with it? It is there yet, except what we used for the horses. It is boiled for sixth sugar.
7125. What labour do you employ in working the plantation? At the present moment we have seventy-eight kanaka boys.
7126. How many Europeans? One European cook at the present moment.

7127. What

7127. What wages do you pay the kanakas? They get £6 per annum. The kanakas cost us 15s. 3½d. per week. H. Ross.
21 Feb., 1889.
7128. You are including everything? Yes, everything; the return passage of the kanaka, clothing, capitation fee, importation, hospital fee, and allowing so much for death rate—that is, allowing interest on passage money, &c. We allow one death per annum for eighty boys.
7129. In the crushing season how many Europeans have you? Last year we had forty all told. We had a few extra men on account of the poor crop. We had to do a great deal more cutting and carting, and I had to get a few extra white men.
7130. Was the crop last year an average one, or a short one in consequence of the drought? A short one.
7131. From your experience of working the plantation generally, what description of labour do you consider most suitable for the field work? Kanakas.
7132. Have you ever employed European labour in field work? I have, and had to replace them with kanaka boys.
7133. Why did you knock them off? They could not do the work. The steady slogging work was too much for them. They could not stand it.
7134. Did you try white labour on more than one occasion? In 1887 we started crushing with thirty boys, and I had to supplement the labour with white men until we providentially got boys. I say providentially with all my heart.
7135. *By Mr. King:* What description of work was it that you found the white men deficient in? All-round work. Plantation work is not laborious, heavy work, but constant work—cutting and carting and firing up, and attending to the centrifugals, and feeding the carrier.
7136. Then it was not only in connection with trashing and weeding in the field that the whites were deficient, but in all-round plantation work? The general work of the plantation. There is no cessation. It is like a horse in a mill—they must go round. It is not too overpowering, but I have found that white men will not keep it up in a steady manner.
7137. Do you include your engineers and fitters? No; theirs is different kind of work altogether.
7138. Is your land ploughed? Yes; all ploughed.
7139. What kind of implements do you generally use? Ploughs, horse-hoes, and scarifiers.
7140. Is your ploughing done by white men or coloured labour? At the present moment it is done by coloured labour, and they do it remarkably well. They handle three horses. Formerly it was done by white men, but since I had to discharge the white men it has been done by coloured labour. We are working now under peculiar circumstances.
7141. If the estate had not been in liquidation, you would have had some Europeans on the plantation? I would have had ploughmen.
7142. How many acres do you cultivate for each black labourer employed? At present there are 45½ gone acres under cultivation.
7143. Have you never calculated how many acres of cane a black labourer can cultivate? I have never gone into that.
7144. At present you are cultivating a little more than six acres for each black labourer—have you got all the labour you require to keep the land under cultivation? I have at present.
7145. Then you have the right proportion? Yes; but in a season like last year I would have to supplement it with white labour.
7146. *By the Chairman:* Does the health of the kanakas suffer in any way? No; they are remarkably healthy. It is the healthiest plantation I have ever been on.
7147. Has the health of Europeans ever suffered from the work on the plantations? No.
7148. What is the cost of the machinery erected on the plantation? I do not know.
7149. What is the capacity of the mill? We can run off comfortably 800 tons with a good crop. I know that is far below what the mill is supposed to do. We manufactured 500 tons the year before last.
7150. You have crushed other cane besides your own? About twenty-five acres.
7151. Grown by the selectors in the neighbourhood? Yes; it was a very poor crop. In fact, some was not worth taking off. If we were in a better state I should simply have refused to take it, but we were taking it to oblige the people. There was only one man who had five or six acres of good cane.
7152. What is the cause of the plantation being in its present financial position? My firm conviction is that it is owing to the low state of the sugar market. If the price of our sugar went above a certain figure we would be handicapped by the beetroot sugar at once. We are almost in a state of siege at present. If our sugar went above a certain figure the continental merchants would flood us with beetroot sugar. Consequently the price is kept down through the fear of continental sugar coming into the market. That is one of the principal causes, although there are many other causes.
7153. The Yeppoon Sugar Plantation is in liquidation? Yes.
7154. Can you tell us why, and why the directors decline to proceed any further? Ever since I went there they have been in a state of hard-ness or insolvency. They could not work the plantation as it should be worked. It was always a rush to get cane off and replant it. That might do in some seasons, but it has not succeeded as yet with us. The climate is too dry. Our ground wants thorough cultivation before you can hope to get a fair crop under ordinary circumstances. To crush and plant you want an enormous number of men. I am only just planting now, and could not plant before on account of the seasons.
7155. What are the prospects of a crop this season? Nil.
7156. *By Mr. King:* We have been told that in buying cane from the farmers it has been the custom of this company to pay at per 100 gallons of juice? Yes.
7157. Can you tell us how many gallons of juice you get from a ton of cane on an average? I think about 140 gallons would be a fair thing. Ours is a single crushing plant. I will not speak authoritatively on that point, but I think that is about the quantity. If we had double crushing we would get a little more. It takes from 14 to 16 tons of ordinary cane to make a ton of sugar. With double crushing it might, I think, take about 10 tons.
7158. The price you have been paying for the juice, and also cutting and carting yourself, must be equal to about 15s. a ton for the cane, delivered at the mill? I made the calculation, but do not remember what it was. I know the selectors had the best of it. We just about cleared our expenses. We got very little out of it.
7159. You

- H. Ross. 7159. You think you did not lose at that rate? We did not lose, but if we charged ourselves for expenses and wear and tear of machinery, I think we might possibly have lost a few shillings.
- 21 Feb., 1889. 7160. Do you think it will be possible to carry on that sugar plantation at a profit, employing only white labour? No; by heavens, no. I would not manage it for five minutes. It would be right enough if it were all scrub land, and small selectors all round, but in forest country it is quite a different thing altogether.
7161. Do I understand you to say that you think if the land was scrub land you would be able to carry it on profitably, employing white labour only? That is, if there was any amount of labour all round us—men with large families that I could employ; but white labour, so far as my experience goes, is so very unstable. You have no command over it. The men will strike at any time for higher wages. In 1887, when I had no boys, I had a lot of white men—eighty or ninety, and the beggars rolled up and said, "We want 5s. a week extra." I said, "What for, my lads; you have engaged for 15s. a week, and now you want £1." They told me they were not going to work for less, and that only a kanaka worked for 15s. a week. I simply said, "Come in here, take your money, and be off; I am rid of so many blackguards." I could not waste my time in dealing with them. I paid them, and thanked God they were gone.
7162. Do you think that if white labour was reliable you could carry on profitably, paying £1 a week? No, I do not think so. No, I would not put my money into it. I would not put a fig of tobacco into it.
7163. Do the settlers employ coloured labour, or do they grow sugar with their own labour? One man has got twenty-five acres, another six acres, another two acres, and another half an acre. There you have all the cane that is grown.
7164. Do they do that entirely with their own labour? The biggest grower has a large family, and he employs two or three kanakas for some time. The other fellows do it themselves.
7165. You say they had a very poor crop. Was that caused by bad cultivation? The bad season.
7166. They thoroughly cultivated the land? One did, and two did not cultivate it properly. Whenever I went there I told them they ought to cultivate it. I said, "It is a bad season, and you have bad cultivation, and how the deuce do you expect anything out of it."
7167. Can you give us the average rainfall for the last five years? The rainfall in 1887 was 41.36 inches. In 1888 it was 35.1; but deducting 10 inches which fell in one night that leaves 25.1 inches for the year.
7168. Had you plenty of field labour in 1887? No; that was the time I had to employ the white labour for something like six weeks before I got the boys.
7169. Could you thoroughly cultivate your land while you were crushing? No; it took me all my time to cut away and plough out. I had the white men cutting and ploughing.
7170. Do you think the want of cultivation materially affected the crop of 1888? No; it did not do that. I got the ploughmen to plough as hard as ever they could lick. It did not affect the crop of 1888 in any way whatever. I may just add that the average sugar crop was 32 cwt. of manufactured sugar to the acre, and in 1888 18 cwt. to the acre. When I started on the Mary River seventeen or eighteen years ago the cost of boys was £8 a head; now we are paying £30. Then we get a great number of boys too young. They are under age, and not capable of standing the ordinary fatigue of a day's work. They are too delicate. The boys have had excellent health down here, but it has been an exceptional plantation.
7171. Is that the character of the boys you have now? One fourth of them are too young, but I have about twenty overtime boys who are splendid fellows.
7172. These boys were passed by the medical officer? Yes; they were passed, but some are too young to do an ordinary fair day's work. There is another matter. You asked me about continuing the plantation. Now, in 1890 the importation of kanakas ceases. Who on God's earth is going into the sugar industry with that Act hanging over their heads. The sugar industry will collapse. It is morally certain that no man will put his money into the sugar industry with that Act hanging over his head. Then there are the improvements in machinery. There are a great number of the present holders who would like to improve the machinery, but they cannot do it. The banks will not advance the money for many reasons, and one reason in particular is this Act, by which the importation of kanakas ceases in 1890. What are you going to do with the country?
7173. By Mr Cowley: Do you think there is any possibility of the company being worked on the central factory principle? Not the slightest ghost of a chance. The whole thing will go smash. Have central factories where you like—I do not care where they are—you will not succeed with white labour unless you have a scrub like they have on the Johnstone and have a lot of farmers with big families, growing cane and making slaves of their boys and girls; but put them in forest country and no mortal thing will make them support a central factory.
7174. What I meant was this—If the mill was carried on and the farmers were allowed to employ kanaka labour, do you think there is any possibility of the settlers growing cane in preference to other crops? No; first of all you have to get a particular class of men—men without money cannot go on to the forest country; it requires capital. Where are you going to get men with capital to go into sugar at its present price and the other disadvantages. If the land was scrub land you might get men to try cane growing, but so long as "Yeppoon" is a plantation it will never be worked as a central mill. I know there are many opposed to me, but I cannot see it.

TUESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY, 1889.

BUNDABERG DISTRICT.

(At Bundaberg.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

MICHAEL DUFFY examined:

7175. *By the Chairman*: What are you, Mr. Duffy? Well, I have been a merchant in Bundaberg, but I am not now. I retired from business some six or eight months ago.

7176. How long were you in business in Bundaberg? Just ten years.

7177. In what condition was the sugar industry in this district about five or six years ago? Well, in May, 1878, when I commenced business, there were just two mills working in the district; in fact the average turn-out was only about 500 tons of sugar per annum in good seasons. That was the gross turn-out. The output for the last year I was in business was a trifle over 20,000 tons. If you wish to get an idea of how the trade of the port has increased from the early days when the principal product was maize, up to last year—that is during the ten years I was in business—I will give you, to-day, the exact tonnage of the imports in the year I commenced business, and in the last year, and you will see the difference. This is correctly taken from my own books, and shows the actual tonnage of imports and exports on which dues were paid.

M. Duffy.

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7178. *By Mr. King*: Were you agent for one of the steamship companies? Yes; for the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company.

7179. So you have a knowledge of all the produce exported and imported? Yes; and I was lessee of the Government wharf for a period of twelve years, and have got a written record of the whole of the trade of the port. The total imports and exports at the port of Bundaberg for the twelve months from 30th April, 1878, to 30th April, 1879, was 6,314 tons. That is the exact tonnage on which dues were paid. The total tonnage of imports and exports at the port of Bundaberg from 30th April, 1887, to 30th April, 1888—the last twelve months I was in business—was 38,152 tons, or a little over six times the quantity of the first year; and I may tell you that in the latter total there is not included the imports of coal, which is about 14,000 tons per annum. Millaquin alone uses about 13,000 tons. Those 38,000 tons represent the actual export of products and import of goods. There is some other information which I would have liked to have tendered to you, but I will not trouble you with it, and the other information can be obtained from the Collector of Customs. That return shows the value of last year's exports of sugar, which is about six times as great as the whole of the other exports put together.

7180. *By the Chairman*: Are you personally acquainted with the sugar growing districts of Bundaberg and with those who are engaged in the industry? Oh, yes; I have been a resident in this district for the last sixteen years.

7181. In what condition do you consider the industry at the present time? Well, it is in rather a languishing condition at the present time from many causes. I would call it a precarious condition. The first cause that I would assign for the present depression in the sugar industry is this: There is not a market within the colony for all the sugar we produce, and it has to be sent to Sydney, Melbourne, Tasmania, and other places, where it has to compete with sugar from other countries; such as China-made sugar, and sugar manufactured in countries where they have the benefit of cheap labour in its manufacture. Take the Millaquin sugar—we could get £23 to £24 a ton for it last year in Queensland, but we could not sell the whole of the sugar in the Queensland market. If we had sent the whole of the sugar to the Brisbane market it would have flooded the market to such an extent that it could not all have been sold there. So about three-fourths of the sugar produced in this district had to be sent to Sydney and Melbourne, where it had to compete with China and other sugars, and it was sold in Melbourne at an average of not more than £23 a ton, from which have to be deducted duty and freight and auction and other charges, so that not more than £17 a ton was realised for the best whites. So that although we have the benefit of producing sugar in Queensland, we do not seem to have the full benefit, because the Queensland market is not sufficiently large to take the whole of our output. That is one of the causes. The next cause to my mind is the uncertainty of the labour question. The banks and money-lending institutions have got it into their heads that black labour is going to be done away with at the end of 1890, and they refuse now to advance more money to the planters—they refuse to assist any plantations that happen to be in difficulties. So that prevents the planters launching out in a great many cases. Such is the uncertainty about the labour question that the banks and other money-lending institutions that have been in the habit of assisting the planters refuse now to do so. The dry seasons have something to do with it; but up to the present this is the most severe season we have had for the sixteen years I have been here. We have always had a fair crop of sugar, take one season with another. Last year the return was fairly good, but the prospect for next season is very poor; indeed, I question if there will be any crushing at all.

7182. Then what in your opinion will be the effect upon the sugar industry of the carrying out of the present law which provides for the stoppage of the importation of Polynesian labour at the end of 1890? Well, unless a rapid advance takes place in the price of sugar, it will to my mind cause a complete collapse of the sugar industry, because at the present price of sugar it would not pay the planter to use white labour only. I do not see what margin would be left. I have had a good deal to do with plantations, and know what several of them have cost to work, and I know what the net proceeds of the sugar that has passed through my hands has been, and even with the benefit of cheap labour a great many of them have barely cleared expenses, and when they have—as is the case with many plantations—to pay interest on the capital invested, they have shown a balance on the wrong side of the ledger. I know that from my own knowledge.

7183. Are

M. Duffy. 7183. Are you acquainted with the farming population of this district? Yes; when I commenced business at first nearly the whole of the present area was occupied by small farmers who were clearing scrub, and the majority of them have given way to the sugar plantations now. With the exception of the two mills I mentioned, the whole of the agricultural production in the district was in the hands of small farmers who were growing maize only.

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7184. Have they now directed their attention to the growth of sugar cane? Some have. Some have sold a portion of their land to the occupants of the plantations and grow maize and cane on the other portions; but the majority of the farmers in the Woongarra scrub have sold their land to the planters, and gone elsewhere to other parts of the district, and selected other land on which they are now living.

7185. Then there are not so many farmers in the district growing cane for the plantations? No; except in the neighbourhood of Bingera, there are not so many small men about. The majority of them have small crushing mills of their own and they send the juice to Millaquin.

7186. And how many farmers do you think there are in the Woongarra scrub who are now growing cane, on which they depend for a livelihood? Well, I should say not more than twenty.

7187. But then there are others, you say, who have small crushing plants of their own and who send the juice to Millaquin? Yes.

7188. How many are there of those? I dare say there are half-a-dozen small farmers who have from 100 to 150 acres who own small mills.

7189. Then, in point of fact, the sugar industry in this district is confined to large plantations? Yes.

7190. And it is to the large plantations that your remarks specially apply in regard to labour? Well they would apply to the whole of them.

7191. Can you say from your own knowledge, extending over ten years, that a European farmer cultivating, say, fifty acres or one hundred acres of cane, could do so with European labour at the present rate of wages and the present price of sugar so as to make it pay? Quite impossible.

7192. Do you think that cane could be grown in a climate such as this on the family principle? In my opinion the only way in which cane will ever be grown here by white labour is when the plantations are all cleared and stumped, and agricultural machinery can be obtained to take the place of labour. To my mind, that is the only way. If kanaka labour is withdrawn before the planters are able to use agricultural machinery I am certain that they will be unable to carry on. I may tell you that, as far as I am concerned myself, I have never been interested in a plantation; I have never engaged black labour in my life, and I am not in favour of it; but I may tell you that, from my experience, I know that it is quite impossible under existing circumstances for sugar to be profitably grown without the aid of cheap labour.

7193. By Mr. King: To what do you attribute the very great increase in the trade of the port of Bundaberg during the ten years you were in business? To the sugar industry only. No other industry has increased with such rapidity. For instance, take the timber industry. There were only two saw-mills on the Burnett River when I commenced business, and there are only two now—there is a third one in course of erection. So that the timber trade was exactly in the same position ten years ago that it is at the present time; so that the increase in the trade of the port could not be set down to that cause. Then, again, the total export of maize the first year I was in business was a trifle under 60,000 bags; while the last year I was in business we exported some 50,000 bags of maize. Of course I allow that the difference between the 50,000 bags of maize now and the 60,000 bags then will now be consumed in the district on account of the large number of horses that are now at work on the various plantations. I hold that there was no more maize grown in the district the last year I was in business than there was on the day I commenced.

7194. How did the extension of the sugar industry affect the value of property in the town and district of Bundaberg? Before Millaquin was established, say about eight years ago, the very best land in the Woongarra scrub, the Grange, Jamieson's land, was offered to myself at £3 per acre. You could not buy the same land now for £10 an acre.

7195. How has the extension of the sugar industry affected the population of Bundaberg? The population has increased. When I came here first there were not more than 300 people in Bundaberg, and I should say that at the present time there are 4,000 people, or over. That is 4,000 Europeans, and not including kanakas.

7196. I suppose the property in the town has increased quite as much as the property in the scrub? More so. The increase in the value of town property has been very rapid, especially since the establishment of Millaquin. I will give you a case in point. I purchased an allotment of land in Bourbon street when Millaquin started for £350. Well, the actual value of that allotment to-day, without the buildings, is from £4,000 to £5,000. That will give you an idea of the increase.

7197. Before cane growing was started the farmers in the district principally grew maize—was that the standard crop of the district? Yes; that was the principal product.

7198. What was the financial position of the farmers when growing maize? It was very poor indeed. They were always in difficulties, and in many cases had to depend on the storekeepers to carry them on from year to year. But immediately the sugar industry was fairly established, the price of their land increased so rapidly that a great many of them were able to sell a small portion of their land and clear off their indebtedness, and that put them in a sound position.

7199. What price did the farmers get for their maize in the old times. What was the average net price per bushel? In the year I commenced business I would not be sure what the price was, but in the year 1878-9 I bought thousands of bags of maize at 1s. 3d. per bushel. The net return to the farmer would be very small indeed.

7200. What did delivered in town? It was delivered to me on the Government wharf for 1s. 3d. per bushel.

7201. Do you think that if the sugar industry of Bundaberg failed it would have any effect on the prosperity of the town and district? Well, if the sugar industry failed it would simply mean the collapse of the town, for there is nothing else to support it; not in its present dimensions, or its present population. There is nothing that we know of that would take the place of sugar. The value of last year's exports of sugar was £300,000, and it would be impossible to immediately turn the land to any other crop that would produce a result like that.

7202. Of late years what price have the farmers netted for their maize? I did make up a return some time ago, and the average price all the year round for the past three or four years has been about 3s. 3d. delivered in town.

7203. What

7203. What is the reason for the maize rising in price? Simply, because there is more demand for it locally. One fourth of the crop is consumed locally, and we also have a large demand for it in other Queensland markets. For instance, Rockhampton, Townsville, and Mackay always draw large quantities from the Bundaberg market. M. Duffy.
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7204. Are those the ports to which you export principally? Yes, and sometimes to Cooktown. We have two crops per annum here. The principal crop comes in February and March.

7205. Who do you suppose are the consumers of the maize that you ship to Mackay? We ship the principal part of the cargoes to W. H. Paxton and Co., Marsh and Webster, and to J. Ellis. I understand from Ellis that the principal consumers of the maize sent to Mackay are the sugar planters. He gave me to understand that that was the principal industry there, and that the bulk of the maize went to the plantations.

7206. Then if the Mackay market was lost to you it would affect the maize growers here? If we are shut out of the northern markets we will have to ship to the south, and that means a reduction of 1s. per bushel.

7207. By Mr. Cowley: You say that £300,000 worth of sugar was exported last year? Yes.

7208. What proportion does this bear to the other exports? It is six times the value of the whole of the other exports put together.

7209. You said that there were about 4,000 white people in the municipality of Bundaberg? Yes.

7210. Can you form any estimate of those actually engaged in agricultural pursuits, over and above the population of Bundaberg? I may tell you that the population of Bundaberg and district—that is not the district immediately around us, but the police district—at last census was 10,500; that included some 2,000 Polynesians—say, 8,500 white people.

7211. That is 8,500 white people and 2,000 black? Yes; we have considerably over 2,000 Polynesians now.

7212. Then from your statement we are to understand that those 2,000 Polynesians who are engaged in the sugar industry conduce to the welfare and support of the whole of the white population of 8,500? Yes, certainly, because there are so many married men with wives and families depending directly or indirectly on the industry. Apart from the number of white people indirectly deriving a livelihood from the sugar industry, I will give you an instance of the case of a sugar plantation in full working order, just to show the number of whites that they employ on a plantation. At Bingera plantation when the mill is in full swing there are 200 white souls there. That includes the white people engaged on the plantation, their wives and families, who are all dependent upon those who are at work on the plantation.

7213. Besides these farmers on the Woongarra scrub and at Bingera, are there not some white farmers at Fairmead? Yes, on the north side there are several farmers. That is on what we call the Gooburrum scrub. They are now putting in cane, because the Messrs. Young have promised to extend their tramway into that part of the scrub. They have not grown cane hitherto.

7214. By the Chairman: Am I to understand you to say that you are rather opposed to black labour? As far as I am concerned I do not believe in black labour, but I look on it as a necessity where the sugar industry is concerned. I have never engaged black labour, and I believe that the time will come when the colony will have to make up its mind to do without it; but not just now. I would not like to see black labour withdrawn at present, because, taking the interests of the districts and my own interests into consideration, I know the disastrous effect it would have. I may tell you, and I am not speaking with any degree of egotism when I disclose my own affairs to you, that the money I made when in business in Bundaberg is all invested in property to the extent, at the present valuation, of £40,000. If the kanaka labour is withdrawn, without waiting for the effect which that would have on the sugar industry, I would take one half of that amount for my property, or if the industry collapsed I would take one-fifth, and be glad to leave the district. That is my opinion of the effect a collapse of the sugar industry would have on the value of property in this district.

7215. Are you a member of the Chamber of Commerce? Yes.

7216. Speaking both as a resident of Bundaberg and a member of the Chamber of Commerce, can you offer any suggestions by which, in your opinion, the sugar industry can be assisted, or the present depression removed? Well, to my mind, the only way to encourage the sugar industry is to continue to give it the assistance of cheap labour, or by giving it a lift in the shape of a bounty. I do not know of any other way of getting over the difficulty. I do not know exactly how the bounty system could be carried out.

7217. Then, in your opinion, the entire prosperity not only of the municipality of Bundaberg but also of the district depends upon the continuance of the sugar industry? Yes.

7218. By Mr. King: I think you have been mayor of Bundaberg? Yes; I was mayor of Bundaberg in 1886, and last year as well.

7219. In your opinion do the kanakas make themselves objectionable in town? No.

7220. Have there not been a good many cases in town in which they have been brought before the police court on serious charges? No, the cases have been mostly very trifling ones. There were one or two cases of attempted murder during the last few years; but those happened on plantations and did not happen in town. I may tell you that, to my mind, they are the quietest race of men I ever met in my life. An objection was raised some two years ago to their coming into town at night on account of drunken rows, and they were kept out of town for a few months, but the business people were glad to get them back again.

7221. Are there not frequently street rows between them, or between them and the whites? Well, the only rows that I have seen have been more from anything else, and the white people, the harrikins, have always been in every case the aggressors.

7222. Are the kanakas given to immoral practices in any way affecting the whites? Are they an annoyance to white women and girls, or are they dangerous when in town? Not that I am aware of.

7223. Have they been charged with offences against women? I think there have been such cases. I can't remember any particular cases, but I think that in proportion to the population the cases in which kanakas were involved have not been more frequent than they have been amongst our own countrymen.

7224. By

M. Duffy. 7224. *By the Chairman*: It has been stated that in one or two parts of Bundaberg no respectable female can walk out after nightfall in consequence of their liability to being insulted by kanakas. Can you in your capacity of late mayor state whether that is correct? I never heard of it during the two years I occupied the office of mayor. No such complaint was ever made to me. During the two years I occupied the mayoral chair no report ever reached me of anything being wrong with the kanakas.

7225. Do you think that if such a statement was correct it must have come under your own notice? It would certainly have done so.

7226. Do you know whether the time-expired kanakas come into actual competition with the whites in this district? I am not aware. That is a question I could not answer. I have heard no complaints. The Polynesian Inspector would be able to give you more information on that subject than I can.

HENRY ST. GEORGE CAULFIELD examined:

H. St. G. Caulfield. 7227. *By the Chairman*: You are Polynesian Inspector in this district? I am, sir.

7228. How long have you held the appointment? Two years.

7229. What is the number of Polynesians employed in this district? 2,600.

7230. Have you a register of all the boys under your inspection? I have.

7231. Can you supply us with a return showing the number of kanakas and where they are employed? I can.

7232. Are all the kanakas in the district directly under your cognizance? They are.

7233. The indented boys as well as the time-expired boys? Yes.

7234. Do you pay periodical visits to the places where they are employed? I do.

7235. Do you visit the plantations? Yes.

7236. In furnishing reports to the head office at Brisbane, do you mention the state in which you found the kanakas? Yes.

7237. Have you heard of many complaints as to ill-treatment? Very few.

7238. Have you ever investigated them? I have had cause to take a case into court. The charge was neglect in not supplying the medical attendance which the Government demanded. That was the only case I had, and the result was that the black labour was withdrawn from the employer.

7239. In what condition do you find the general health of the Polynesians? Very fair; there is one disease they are rather subject to, and that is pneumonia and tuberculosis. They do not seem to suffer from any other complaint.

7240. What is the rate of mortality amongst them? From fifty to seventy per thousand per annum.

7241. Have all the plantations the necessary hospital accommodation? They have not what I call hospital accommodation, not what I have been accustomed to; but if a case is a serious one the boys are generally isolated. The islanders as a rule object to isolation.

7242. Is there a hospital for kanakas in connection with the general hospital of Bundaberg? There is a kanaka ward.

7243. Are serious cases sent in from the plantations to that ward? Yes; I always insist on their being sent in.

7244. Are there dispensers to administer medicine to the Polynesians on the various plantations? On all the large ones there are, and on the small plantations the employer generally attends to it himself.

7245. Have you ever inspected the dispensers' books and seen that the entries are all properly made? I have never done so. I have confined my duties to going round the lines and seeing what state of health the boys are in, and asking them if they have any complaints to make.

7246. Can you say from your own personal knowledge whether duly qualified men are employed as dispensers? I would not call them duly qualified men; they are practical men.

7247. Do you know if they have passed the necessary examinations? No; I do not think so.

7248. Are they approved of by the Pharmaceutical Board in Brisbane? No. They generally carry out the doctor's instructions as written, and as the result of his visits. The dispenser at Fairmead has had five years' experience with the islanders.

7249. Are you able from memory to state the number of indented boys and the number of time-expired boys in the district? Yes; indented boys, 1,543, up to the 31st December, 1888. There are about 1,000 time-expired boys, who generally re-engage.

7250. Do you know what most of those time-expired boys do? I can tell you where everyone of them is.

7251. Do you know of any of these time-expired men who are coming into actual competition with the white men in this district? I cannot say that I do.

7252. Do you know of any of these boys who are waiting about the district looking for employment? Lately there have been more than I like to see.

7253. Do you know if any of those time-expired boys have left the district and gone to other districts? No; they come to my district rather than go elsewhere.

7254. Have not some left here and gone to Rockhampton? Very, very few.

7255. Are the kanakas who are under your jurisdiction in this district well behaved? They are, on the whole.

7256. Have many cases of misconduct been brought before the police court? Not so very many.

7257. Have you ever known them behaving improperly to ladies on the streets, or have you ever had complaints of such being the case? I never heard of a case.

7258. Do you think that if such a thing occurred in Bundaberg you would have heard of it? I would certainly have heard of it. Kanakas as a rule are very respectful.

7259. Then if statements have been made that there are one or two places in Bundaberg where females cannot pass after nightfall because they are in danger of being insulted by kanakas, you would not consider them correct? I would doubt such a statement very strongly.

7260. Then as far as your knowledge goes, as regards the kanakas of this district, everything in connection with them is going on in a satisfactory way? Yes.

7261. And you have no complaints made to you of the kanakas interfering with the white population in the labour that they can perform? The only complaints of that class that I receive are of the illegal employment of islanders by small farmers.

7262. Have you investigated those complaints? Yes, by personal inspection, and reported the matter to the head office.

7263. How do you manage about the repayment of the passage money to the first employer in the case of time-expired boys who re-engage? That is a very serious point. Section 5 of "*The Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1884*" permits the recovery from the new employer of the return passage paid by the late employer of any islander who re-engages. When I joined the office I found a system in operation under which an islander on termination of his agreement paid his late employer £5, receiving a receipt for the same. This payment was supposed to lead to increased wages being paid to the kanaka by his new employer, of from £15 to £20 per annum. Any islander, therefore, who does not so fully grasp the position as to do this—thereby shifting the liability of the return passage from the employers to his own shoulders—loses the sum of £5 on each subsequent yearly engagement he enters upon. I find the system open to very serious abuses, being most prejudicial in various ways to the interests of the Pacific Islanders. Large employers are in favour of amending section 5, by making the return passage liability as much a liability as the providing of food and clothing, and failing this, I should propose that the return passage be collected from the new employers by the inspectors, who would pay the last employer on production of proof of title to the same. A fee of 5s. would be gladly paid by the recipient of return passage money, as much injustice and annoyance would thereby be prevented. Half of the fee could go towards making up for extra clerical work. This idea, I may add, has the support here of all those who are interested in checking these abuses.

H. St. G. Caulfield.

26 Feb., 1889.

7264. Are there any kanaka haunts in Bundaberg such as have been recently described in the *Maryborough Chronicle*? I have reason to believe so. They are encouraged to go there by the whites who sell them liquor. I have tried to get strong measures to stop it. They receive every encouragement. I do my best to stop what nuisances I can, but I do not like interference in what I consider to be police duty. I should like very much to put these things down.

7265. Do you see that the kanakas are paid their wages? Yes.

7266. Are their wages paid to them direct? Yes; paid to the islanders direct, before me. Any sums of money that they care to give to me I place in the bank.

7267. Do many of them deposit money in the savings bank? I have about £4,000 to the credit of about 878 kanakas.

7268. *By Mr. King*: Do the deaths which occur amongst the kanakas occur chiefly amongst new arrivals? Yes.

7269. What becomes of the kanakas after they have fulfilled their three years' agreement—are they re-employed or do they return home? Fifty per cent. return home, 25 per cent. go back to their original employer, and 25 per cent. go to other employers.

7270. What is their condition in regard to health? Sound, as a rule.

7271. Has any attempt been made to give religious instruction to the kanakas? In a good many instances. There are three missions.

7271a. Do any large number of kanakas profess to be Christians? A very large proportion.

7272. Do they attend the service of the churches in town, or have they churches of their own? They attend the Sunday schools and have services there.

7273. By whom are those services conducted? By Mr. Eustace, Mr. Johnstone, Mr. Angus Gibson, and Miss Young, and services are given in town by Mr. Morris, at which he has ladies to help him.

7274. Are any of them baptised? Not very many of them, I believe.

7275. How long have these missions been in operation? Ever since I have been here. They have taken a deep hold since I have been here during the past two years. During the past two years this matter has been gone into thoroughly, and the credit of it is due to Miss Young.

7276. Do you think the kanakas are influenced by religious teaching? I do certainly think so.

7277. Do you think that they have improved? Oh, yes.

7278. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do the medical officers attend at the plantations regularly? On some plantations regularly, and on others when called on.

7279. Do they prescribe? They do.

7280. Do they mix the medicine for the men? I do not think they do. They examine the sick boys, and state what has to be given to them and how they are to be treated.

7281. You said that the death rate was fifty out of every 1,000. Do those deaths occur on plantations or in the hospitals? Principally on plantations.

7282. You say that you have nearly £4,000 in the savings bank on account of 800 islanders? Yes.

7283. Do those men, as a rule, spend their money before they go away? Yes; as a rule they spend pretty well the whole of it.

7284. Can you tell us whether the Government, from the Polynesian Fund or from any other fund, assists the mission work in this district? Not to my knowledge.

7285. Then is it done by private enterprise? Yes.

7286. Are the gentlemen named by you paid annual salaries? I have every reason to believe that they are, and it is collected from the employers and planters and by voluntary contributions.

7287. Do they devote the whole of their time to this work? They do.

7288. *By the Chairman*: What is the maximum number of kanakas on any one plantation in Bundaberg? 299.

7289. And the minimum number? Two.

7290. What is the proportion of white to black labour? One to four.

7291. Are you also acting immigration agent for the district of Bundaberg? Yes; I am.

7292. Can you state the rate of wages paid to white people? Yes; white farm labourers, £31 10s. a year and rations; ordinary labourers, £33 a year and rations; ploughmen, £35 10s. and rations; married couples, £48 10s. per annum and rations; domestic servants, from 10s. to 11s. per week.

7293. What is the average number of arrivals of islanders in the district during the course of a month? Sixty-five is the average.

7294. And what is the average number of departures for the islands? Thirty-one.

7295. What do you think would be the gross amount of wages paid to kanakas in this district in the course of a year? £28,000 in money only.

7296. What would be the average per kanaka? £11 4s. for every Polynesian in the district.

7297. And

- H. St. G. Caulfield. 7297. And are you of opinion that the whole of that money is spent in the district? Nearly all; a very small portion goes out of it.
- 26 Feb., 1889. 7298. *By Mr. Cowley*: How do you arrive at the number of whites employed? I take the employer's returns, in which he has to state the number of whites he employs. I find the proportion is one to four.
7299. *By the Chairman*: What percentage of islanders remain after their three years are up? 25 per cent. remain with the original employer, and 25 per cent with other employers. I look upon the 25 per cent. who remain with their original employers as a very happy outlook.

THURSDAY, 28 FEBRUARY, 1889.

BUNDABERG DISTRICT.

(At Bundaberg.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.,
A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

THEOPHILUS PARSONS PUGH examined:

- T. P. Pugh. 7300. *By the Chairman*: You are Police Magistrate at Bundaberg? Yes.
- 28 Feb., 1889. 7301. Will you state to the Commission what your experiences are in relation to the Polynesians coming into town? I think that by a system which Mr. Caulfield, the Inspector, and myself have talked over, and mentioned to several of the planters about here, and which suggestions meet with the approval of those I have spoken to, the Polynesians could be very easily managed when in town. The system is—taking care not to touch tribal dissensions—there should be a class of constables (islanders) on each plantation, to accompany any large number of islanders—say, one for every twenty. Those special police constables would wear a certain badge, and they should be recognised by the police.
7302. *By Mr. King*: Do you mean that those special constables should be kanakas? Yes. They could be picked from amongst the better class of long time boys. They would understand the language, and by being placed in charge of the boys I think it would have a very good effect. It is true that there have not been many rows for a considerable time; but those boys frequently get drunk on liquor supplied in shops kept by Chinamen, especially in some of those fruit shops. They get drunk there, and very frequently meet other men of other tribes, and then there frequently is a row. But by taking those boys from the better class and from the more well-behaved boys—and the planters are quite willing to give them some slight remuneration for their services—I think it would have a very good effect, and the prevalence of rows in the streets and on the road on Saturdays would be very much lessened.
7303. *By the Chairman*: Then it is on Saturday nights only that the kanakas come into town in large numbers? Yes; chiefly.
7304. How many do you suppose come into town on Saturday night? Well, I have seen myself, I might say, at least 200 or 300 in town of a Saturday night. They generally congregate about the Chinamen's houses at the lower end of Bourbon street. There is no doubt whatever that they are encouraged in gambling by the Chinamen, and that they do gamble. One thing I may mention, there appears to be growing amongst them rooted objections to put their money into the Government Savings Bank, and they absolutely leave it with these "pimps" at those shops, and allow them to make use of it as they like. One man was taken into custody not long since for robbing a kanaka of something like £20. The case broke down because the kanaka told him, "When you want the money, you take him, you pay me back by-and-bye." And these kanakas prefer the Chinamen because they suppose that they will give them a better rate of interest. I knew one Chinaman, named Loo Ti, who told me himself that his wife had stolen a box from him, containing £60 belonging to these black boys. It is terrible the large sums of money these Chinamen have sometimes in their hands.
7305. Do you know if time-expired boys, or boys with tickets, are walking about the streets in any large numbers, obtaining work on their own account? There have been large numbers of them. I could not say how many, because they camp in different places. The police not long since had to root out a camp of kanakas and aboriginals from a reserve just across the boundary of the South Bundaberg municipality. They were a perfect nuisance there, and the residents in the locality complained to the police and to myself repeatedly about it.
7306. A statement has been made that no respectable female can go out after dark in one locality for fear of being insulted by kanakas. Would that be in the neighbourhood of the reserve you have just mentioned? I expect it would be, sir.
7307. From your own personal knowledge can you say that respectable people live in the neighbourhood of the particular spot you have just mentioned? Undoubtedly; in fact it would not have been safe—in my opinion—for females to be about after dark, not only on account of the kanakas, but because of our own blacks. There is one thing I would like to say about the return passage money. The £5 is paid by the original employer, the one who imported the labour. He has to hand the £5 to the Government, and it remains in their hands, and I do not think that the next employer, or the employer after him should be required to pay the £5 back to the original importer. Let the Government keep the £5 in their hands, and let that be sufficient. Some of the planters about here do what I consider to be a very illegal thing, and a very improper thing; they deduct the £5 from the wages of the kanaka. It has been known to be done by several, and Mr. Caulfield would have told you of it, but I do not think he knows himself. I should not allow anything of the kind if it came before me. There is one thing I would like to mention, and that is, that there are a great many people here who are taking a great deal of trouble with these kanakas.

kanakas. There is Mr. Johnstone, the missionary, on the north side; and Mr. Eustace. Services are held in the Church of England Sunday School on Sunday afternoons, and it is a common thing to see about 240 or 300 kanakas attending, and being taught by a young lady who is just about to be married, 23 Feb., 1889. T. P. Publ.

and a few assistants of hers. I refer to Miss Benstead. A Sunday or two ago a very handsome present was made to her by the boys who subscribed the money amongst themselves. I am told by those who were present when the presentation was made that it was a very pleasing spectacle. The boys made the presentation themselves, and some of them tried to say something in doing so, but completely broke down, and a lot of them were crying, so sorry were they to think they were going to lose their teacher. Mr. Angus Gibson has a school on his plantation, and his daughters teach the boys. The kanakas are very apt scholars, and learn to read—some of them very well indeed—in a very short time.

7308. Do you think that the admission of the kanakas into the town on Saturday nights should be absolutely prohibited? No; I hardly think that could be done, but the number coming in from each plantation should be limited as far as possible. If the planter does not give them leave to go they won't go. I think that if they were made to understand that so many should go in on the one Saturday night, and so many on the next Saturday night, they would soon fall in with it.

7309. Have you had any instances coming before you in your judicial capacity of these kanakas coming into actual competition with white men for employment? Well, I have known cases where kanakas have taken contracts for clearing scrub and for cutting up firewood.

7310. Then is the kanaka himself becoming an employer of labour? Yes.

7311. *By Mr. Cowley*: Have there been any tribal fights in town between those men? Those that have taken place have almost invariably been tribal. The Tanna boys are particularly quarrelsome and pugilistic.

7312. Have there been any serious results from these rows? There have been one or two cases of stabbing, in which one kanaka stabbed another. They are very fond of using their hoes.

7313. I mean in town? The stabbing took place in town, just at the end of Arthur street.

7314. Have there ever been any serious quarrels between the whites and the blacks? No; not since I have been here. I believe there was a very serious row between them some time ago.

7315. I mean, from your own knowledge? No; not in my time.

7316. Can you give us the cause of the objections the kanakas have to depositing their money into the Government Savings Bank? Simply because they seem to fancy that they cannot get it out so readily. They leave their boxes at the huxters' shops, and they keep their money in those boxes.

7317. Do you know whether one reason why the kanakas do not put their money into the savings bank is because they are not able to get the money of their deceased friends? No; I can not say that it is. Very few cases of that kind have ever come under my notice. Mr. Caulfield takes care that the money due to a deceased Polynesian is handed over to him (Mr. Caulfield).

7318. But not to the surviving relatives? Well, I believe that the Government instructs him how to deal with that.

7319. You say that there have been several instances of employers taking the £5 return passage money from the islanders. Is it not a fact that all the wages are paid in the presence of the Polynesian inspector? Yes.

7320. And does he connive at this reduction? No; he is very angry because it is done; but the employers get the money back from them. I have, in Mr. Caulfield's absence, had thousands of pounds paid at Fairymead and Windermere to the boys in my presence, and have never seen the men hand the £5 to their employer.

7321. Do you say that the planters take the £5 from the kanakas afterwards? That seems to be the case.

7322. Has there been an authentic case of this sort of thing, in which the inspector or yourself has had to interfere? Not that I could interfere with; Mr. Caulfield would have to interfere.

7323. But when you were acting for him? If I had discovered anything of that sort I would have written and informed Mr. Caulfield, and he would have prosecuted.

7324. *By Mr. King*: How could you prosecute them? Not prosecute; but he could sue them for money owing to the kanakas.

7325. *By Mr. Cowley*: But has there ever been a case of this kind before the court? It would not be likely to come before the court. I prefer not to mention names.

7326. You said that you thought the second or third employer ought not to pay the £5 passage money to the previous employer? I do not think so; it creates such an amount of confusion, and is being carried to a ridiculous extent, in some cases where a man has employed a kanaka just for a few weeks during the busy season. One party—Mrs. Greathead—was sued the other day for £5 by an employer who had previously employed the boy.

7327. But do you not think it is only just that the man who indents the boys, and who has paid the £5 return passage money, should be recouped if the boy does not return home, but is engaged by another employer? I do not look at it in that light. The employer knows he will have to pay the money when he indents the boy.

7328. *By Mr. King*: But he indents those boys for himself and not for others? Yes; and they are supposed to be sent back at the end of their term.

7329. *By Mr. Cowley*: If the inspector was made to collect the amount due for the return passage money, and hand it over to the previous employer, would not that simplify matters? That would be a better way of doing it.

7330. We have heard that there are over 2,500 kanakas in the district. Do you think that they conduct themselves fairly well? Yes.

7331. Do they conduct themselves as well as 2,500 white men employed in labouring pursuits? I have no doubt that they do. Take them man for man, and compare them as a class and put them on a level, and I think they behave themselves quite as well as the ordinary labouring classes of white men in the colony. In fact I will go further, and say that they behave a great deal better very often.

7332. *By the Chairman*: Could you give us an approximate idea of the number of ticket boys who are now out trying to get employment? No; I could not. Mr. Caulfield would be able, because he keeps a register.

FREDERICK LEWIS NOTT examined :

- F. L. Nott. 7322. *By the Chairman* : How many years' experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar ? About ten years.
- 28 Feb., 1889. 7323. What is the name of your estate ? Windermere.
7324. What is its total area ? About 1,500 acres.
- 7324A. How many are now under cultivation ? About 700 acres.
7325. How many are now under cane ? About 670 acres.
7326. And the other thirty acres ? Sweet potatoes, orchard, and garden, and one thing and another.
7327. How many acres of cane were crushed last season ? 400 acres.
7328. And how much sugar was made ? I sent 650 tons of juice to Millaquin, and made 350 tons of sugar. But I would like to call your attention to the fact that this was a very heavy yield ; it was all two or three year old cane, every stick of it.
7329. How much molasses did you make ? Well, I could hardly tell you ; we have a lot of it to dry yet. We have a lot boiled up, and it is in large tanks, and I do not know what sugar will be in it.
7340. What do you do with it ? This is the first season that ever we have made sugar, and we have done nothing with it. We expect a distillery to be erected to which we will be able to send it.
7341. What amount of capital is invested in this estate ? About £50,000.
7342. What rate of interest did it return during 1888 ? We have just erected another mill, and if the extra outlay this year is included, it has returned no interest.
7343. But supposing you had not gone in for the additions, what would have been the interest ? Then I should not have got the 350 tons of sugar ; I should say 10 per cent.
7344. What were your working expenses for 1888 ? About £8,000.
7345. What labour was employed in working your plantation, specifying Europeans and kanakas ? We had about forty Europeans and ninety-five kanakas ; but we had about twenty-five Europeans assisting in erecting the new machinery.
7346. What were the average wages paid to the coloured classes ? From £6 to £18, with rations.
7347. What was the total amount of wages paid to Europeans during 1888 ? £1,400.
7348. What description of labour do you consider most suitable for field work on plantations ? Only one class will do, and that is kanakas, without doubt.
7349. Have you ever employed European labour in field work ? Yes.
7350. With what result ? Very unsatisfactory.
7351. Were they newly arrived emig ants, or those acclimatised to the colony ? All sorts ; both. I had some this season. I employed a gang of men to cut cane and gave them £4 10s. an acre. I put them into a field of cane alongside my own boys. There was no difference in the cane, but my boys could cut a row and a half each a day, while the white men, who were on contract—and they were good, honest, hard working fellows, not new chums at all—could never average a row each. Sometimes one of them would cut a row in a day, but the lot of them never averaged a row, and they could not make it pay so they threw it up. They said they could not do the work.
7352. When your land is perfectly free and clear of stumps, and you are able to work it with horses and ploughs, would Europeans be able to do all the work now done by black labour ? A good deal of it.
7353. How many acres of cane do you cultivate to each black labourer employed ? I think about six acres.
7354. How many acres of cane would one European be able to work, if able to use horse and plough on the land ? A European alone could not do it. There is a certain amount of work in the cane field that a white man is not able to do, or that they won't do ; and I do not believe they can. The kanakas would still have to be employed planting, weeding, chipping, trashing, and cutting ; all other work a European might be able to do.
7355. Do the black labourers employed in field work suffer in health ? No ; sometimes a little at first.
7356. Are those who do suffer mostly newly arrived boys ? Yes.
7357. Then, as soon as they are acclimatised they become better in health ? Yes ; you can see them improving in health every day, and in six months' time they are half as big again as when they arrived.
7358. Do you think that field work affects the health of Europeans ? I have never seen any of them stick long enough at a job to become affected. I could not say. I never saw a white man stick at it a week.
7359. What is the cost of cutting and burning off scrub in this district ? We can do it for about £5 an acre.
7360. What would be the cost of stumping it, and making it fit for the plough ? It is impossible to do it, or almost impossible. I do not think £40 an acre would do it. You would have to trench it all three feet deep. I mean immediately it is burnt off.
7361. Then, in process of time, after the cane was planted and you had taken three or four crops off it, would it not be much more easy to stump ? Yes.
7362. What would it cost then per acre ? £5.
7363. Has your cane suffered from any disease ? The only thing our cane has suffered from is drought.
7364. Have you never had your cane affected by what is known as the grub ? Oh yes, here and there ; nothing to speak of, we have had the grub but they do very little damage.
7365. What was the cost of your machinery and where was it made ? About £15,000. It was manufactured principally in Maryborough.
7366. What is the cost of your annual overhaul and repairs ? We have never had any overhaul or repairs ; we have just finished three months' work. We generally reckon about 10 per cent.
7367. What is the rate of wages paid to European labourers outside of agriculture in this district ? What does the Divisional Board pay ? I think 6s. a day is what the Divisional Board pays.
7368. What tropical products other than sugar can be grown here ? The only product we have had experience in is coffee, and that grows luxuriantly and bears heavy crops.
7369. Could coffee be grown profitably with white labour ? No.
7370. What labour would you require ? It must be cheap and plentiful.
7371. Have you grown any tropical products besides sugar ? Nothing except coffee and that only as an experiment. I believe it grows here better than in Ceylon.

7372. Can

7372. Can you state the causes which in your opinion have brought about the present depression in the sugar industry? Yes. There are a variety of causes. There is one thing that we have suffered much from, and that is having to compete with the bounty-fed sugars of the Continent, and with sugars grown in countries where they have cheap labour. Then we have had bad seasons, and that has intererred materially with us. We have only had one good season during the past six years. Then there was the attitude assumed by the late Government in touching the kanaka labour question, and in raising the price of recruiting from 10 guineas to £30. A few years ago we could get boys here for £10 10s. per head, and now their passages cost us from £20 to £30. You cannot get them under £23 at present. The competition with bounty-fed sugar and the increased cost of kanakas are the principal causes of the present depression in the sugar industry.

F. L. Nott.
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7373. Can you offer any suggestion by which, in your opinion, the industry can be relieved of its present depression? There is no doubt that the industry has suffered from over-legislation, and what we want is to be left alone principally. If we had a few good seasons, and if the Government would assist us to get reciprocity, it would do us a great deal of good. We want reciprocity with the Southern colonies—with Victoria and South Australia. We have been admitting their flour free for a good many years. We are not likely to have a tax on flour. The Government should place themselves in communication with Victoria and South Australia, and tell them that as we are admitting their flour in free of duty, they should admit our sugar to their ports free of duty. I think the Government should secure reciprocity for us, and assist us in irrigation.

7374. Can you offer any suggestions by which the growth of the tropical articles you have mentioned can be promoted? No, unless it is cheap labour. That is the only thing I can recommend. I have had no experience in the growth of any other crop but sugar.

7375. Is it your opinion that the prosperity of the town of Bundaberg and of its people very largely depends upon the sugar industry? I think that the prosperity of the people and of the town of Bundaberg depends, not very largely, but altogether on the sugar industry. There is no doubt about that.

7376. You are aware the Polytechnic Labour Act, which empowers the importation of kanakas, will come to an end on 1st January, 1891? Yes.

7377. What will be the effect supposing that Act is enforced? In this district I am certain it will ruin the sugar industry. I do not think there are three people here who would attempt to carry on with white men, and if they do attempt it they can't get them.

7378. By Mr. King: You are acquainted with the whole of the sugar land in this district? Yes.

7379. Do you think that exhaustion of the land has had anything to do with any diminution in the yield there may have been? No; not at all.

7380. There is a Planters' Association here, is there not? Yes.

7381. Are you a member of it? I am.

7382. Are you authorised to give the evidence you have given as a representative of the Planters' Association? I was asked by them to do so.

7383. And they hold the same views which you have enunciated? They do, possibly most of them more pronounced.

7384. By Mr. Cowley: The sugar you say you have in the mill is included in the 1,000 tons you made? Yes; most of it—about 25 tons.

7385. Could you tell us what wages were earned by the Europeans when they cut cane by contract? About 1s. a day each after paying for rations. I supplied them with rations at town prices. In one case there were four men working in a gang and they worked five days each, that is twenty days work in all, and when I squared up with them there was 19s. 8d. to divide amongst them.

7386. Has the Planters' Association done anything to try and prevent the sale of intoxicating liquor to kanakas? Yes; repeatedly we have obtained convictions. We have offered for a long time £5 reward for every conviction, and we have paid fifteen or sixteen of these. Rewards have also been given by planters privately apart from the association.

ANDREW GIBSON examined:

7387. By the Chairman: Are you the president of the Planters' Association of Bundaberg? Yes.

A. Gibson.

7388. Are you authorised to give evidence on their behalf before the Commission? Yes.

7389. Has the association prepared certain statistical returns which they have authorised you to present to the Commission on their behalf? Yes.

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7390. Do you now produce those returns? Yes. I produce Schedule A, a return of complete sugar mills, with the names of the proprietors [see Appendix]; Schedule B, a return of crushing mills for extracting juice only, with the names of the proprietors [see Appendix]; Schedule C, a return of cane growers only [see Appendix]; and a sheet bearing a recapitulation of the three schedules presented [see Appendix]. I might mention that these schedules are made up from printed forms which were issued to the farmers and planters, and which they filled up and returned to the association. Messrs. Cran and Co., of Millaquin, did not send in their return of Millaquin, owing to Mr. Cran being absent. Last night I saw Mr. Cran and he stated that the capital invested in Millaquin was roughly estimated at £100,000, but this morning when I interviewed Mr. Cran he added £50,000 to that, so that the total capital invested in the refinery is £150,000. The returns do not give you the number of blacks and whites employed, or the wages paid to both in connection with Cran's refinery, but they could be obtained and added and that would give the correct returns for the Bundaberg district. You will note that we pay £51,000 to white labourers and £71,000 to black boys; and I wish just to make a statement in reference to that remark, so that it may not be misleading, because there is just a tendency to mislead in a matter of this kind. This is a letter I have attached to my returns which places the matter before you as it ought to be put. It is as follows:—

THE

A. Gibson.

28 Feb., 1889.

THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO THE CAUSE OF "DEPRESSION IN QUEENSLAND SUGAR INDUSTRY."

Bingera Plantation.

Bundaberg, 19th January, 1889.

GENTLEMEN,—In reference to the schedule, which may be placed before you, respecting the "wages paid on our plantation to kanakas" (viz., £5,621 10s. 1d.), we would point out that the table under that heading is not quite clear, and therefore here give the particulars of the item, which we have no doubt will apply to most plantations in this district, as follows:—

1. Wages paid to islanders as per Pacific Island Labourers Act	£2,271	2	6
2. General expenses on account, kanakas	298	17	0
3. Passage money	1,211	5	0
4. Cost of cookhouses (rations)	1,729	4	4
5. Medical attendance	81	1	6
Total	£5,621	10	4

Might we here point out that, with the exception of the first item, wages, and one-third of the passages amount (£143 15s.), in all £2,684 17s. 6d., is all that can fairly be debited to black labour, leaving £2,936 12s. 10d. (the amount of food, clothing, medical attendance, &c.), which may be added to cash paid white labour, or more than half the above sum debited to black labour.

You will also note white labour on same schedule amounts to a total of £5,655 2s. 5d.; but men have been cutting firewood amounting to £1,034 11s. 1d., and fencing by contractors and others £265 5s. 1d.; add to this surplus black labour cash, £2,936 12s. 10d. Total received by whites, £9,915 14s. 5d.

ANGUS GIBSON.

I produce a return showing the sugar exported from the port of Bundaberg for 1888. [See Appendix.] I have now to produce a return of all sugars imported into Melbourne, Victoria, from February, 1888, to January, 1889, showing a total for the twelve months of 44,370 tons. Those are taken from the return sheets of Messrs. Fraser and Co., Ltd. [See Appendix.] I also produce a return showing sugar imported into South Australia from 1884 to 1887. In 1887 the sugar imported into South Australia amounted to 12,810 tons, of which 2,435 cwt. was imported from Great Britain. Out of the total 12,900 tons exported into South Australia in 1887, Queensland only sent 231 tons.

7391. In one of those sheets there is a little explanation required. In schedule C the return gives the number of cane growers as seventeen. Are these small cane growers? Yes; small cane growers who have no mills of their own.

7392. Were you authorised to state anything specifically on the part of the Planters' Association to the Commission in addition to the returns you have furnished? No. I was simply deputed to reply to any questions that might be asked. The schedules purport to give all the information that we believed it was necessary to give.

7393. Has the association considered the causes that have depressed the sugar industry, and have they deputed you to come before us and offer on their behalf suggestions by which the industry could be relieved of its present depression? The reply given in Mr. Young's schedule has been discussed by the association, and by a committee appointed by the association, and they consider that those are the grounds for the depression, and the suggestions therein are the best by which prosperity might be brought back again to the industry. My replies and Mr. Young's were proposed as the answers of the association, but there was a remark in mine which did not go down very well and Mr. Young's were considered best and I agreed.

7394. By Mr. King: Can you tell us what is the total cost of manufacturing and putting on the market a ton of sugar, the cane being delivered free, that is, not taking into consideration the cost of the cane? I have tabulated at your desire from my books the information necessary to put before you. I put it before Messrs. Young and Cran, and they looked over it, and I believe that both of those gentlemen are now sitting down drawing up a similar return of their own. This return has been taken from my books. During 1888 the mill was running twenty-one weeks, and the average output of sugar was 78 tons per week; the total output for the year being 1,635 tons. In my answers to questions I say 1,670 tons, but the balance is a low sugar, which is in the store to be made up.

[NOTE.—In answer to the Chairman, the witness put in a paper showing the whole of the charges on a ton of sugar from the time the cane was brought into the mill until the same was sold, including cost of manufacturing, transit, commission to agents, interest, rates on machinery and buildings, &c. This return showed the cost (not including the price of cane) of manufacturing a ton of sugar from the time it was delivered at the mill until it was sold to be £10 3s. 8½d. per ton, or, adding £5 15s. for the cost of cane, £15 18s. 8½d. altogether.]

Witness continuing: I do not think that a central mill could work it so cheaply as I have put it down there. Mr. Young says that he could not, but his process is more costly than most of them.

7395. By Mr. King: Did you hand in a census of the white population at Bingera plantation? Yes; a census of the population on 16th February, 1889. It shows that there are 114 persons—eighty-nine males and fifty-five females—residing on the plantation proper, and twenty persons—ten males and ten females subsisting on the plantation but residing in the outskirts.

JOHN CRAN examined:

J. Cran.

28 Feb., 1889.

7396. By the Chairman: What number of years' experience have you had in the growth and manufacture of sugar? About twenty years.

7397. What is the name of your sugar refinery in Bundaberg? Millaquin.

7398. How much sugar did you manufacture last year? 6,933 tons. That was in 1888. That is as near as I know. It may be a little more or less.

7399. How much molasses? About 250,000 gallons. That is an estimate, because we did not measure it.

7400. What amount of capital is invested in the refinery? From £30,000 to £160,000 it cost us.

7401. Can you give us any idea of the working expenses for the year? This last year the expenses have of course been much less. The expenses of the year before last were about £60,000, while this year they were only from £40,000 to £45,000; I am not quite sure.

7402. That

7402. That does not include the money you pay for the juice? No; that is the working expenses only.
7403. What labour do you employ in working the refinery? About 170 white men—Europeans—and about 32 Polynesians. Those are time-expired boys who made an agreement with us for the season.
7404. What is the average rate of wages that you pay those boys? 10s. a week and rations.
7405. What was the total amount of wages paid to Europeans and kanakas last year? £10,584; a little more than that. The year before we paid between £14,000 and £15,000. This has been a short year.
7406. What is the total amount paid to kanakas? £483.
7407. What is the cost of your annual overhaul at the refinery? I should think from £2,000 to £3,000 a year. The year before last we paid about £5,000; and the year before that, £2,000. From £2,000 to £3,000 is the average.
7408. Is the whole of that work done by Europeans? Yes.
7409. Has the refinery suffered from the depressed condition of the sugar industry? Yes; very much indeed.
7410. What, in your opinion, is the cause of the present depression in the sugar industry? The first thing is the fall in the price of sugar, due to competition with the bounty-fed sugar from continental countries; the great cost of labour here as compared with other sugar-growing countries. I include in that statement Polynesian labour, which is very much more expensive than it used to be. We have suffered very much during the last five or six years from droughts. A year like this means almost absolute ruin.
7411. Can you offer any suggestion by which in your opinion the industry can be relieved of its present depression? If we could have introduced some kind of reciprocity which would protect Queensland grown sugar against outside competition until we were in a better position to compete with the outside world. Then the Queensland Government should encourage and assist the industry in every possible way, by the inauguration of a scheme of irrigation, similar to that so successfully carried on in America. I consider that the most important thing of all.
7412. Is it your opinion that the establishment of irrigation works would materially assist in building up the prosperity of Bundaberg? Yes.
7413. What do you think would be the effect upon Bundaberg supposing anything were to happen to the industry in consequence of which it would collapse? I think the effect would be very serious. What it would be, would be very hard to say. I believe it would be absolute ruin to a great many—in fact, I am sure of it.
7414. If any thing should occur by which the present plantations should discontinue the growth of the cane, in what position would your refinery be placed? We would have to shut it up.
7415. Then it is your opinion that the continuance in operation of the refinery and the future prosperity of Bundaberg rests entirely on the sugar industry? As far as the sugar refinery is concerned, altogether; and as far as Bundaberg is concerned, to a very large extent indeed.
7416. Do you know of any other crop that has been grown in Bundaberg that has yielded the same return as the farmers get for their juice? No.
7417. Then in point of fact it is the only profitable crop they have grown for years? The only profitable crop they have grown yet.
7418. Then if anything were to happen by which the growth of cane were to be discontinued, it means the loss of livelihood to the small farmers of the district? Yes.
7419. *By Mr. King*: Did not the maize pay the farmers before the sugar came in? I do not think so; but I cannot speak from my own experience.
7420. Do you import any foreign sugar for your refinery? No.
7421. You depend entirely on the sugar grown in the district of Bundaberg? Entirely.
7422. I believe that your firm are about to erect a mill in the Isis scrub—is that the case? We are about to erect a juice-crushing mill there, and take the juice to the refinery at Yengarie.
7423. Have you made arrangements with the farmers to grow cane for you? Yes.
7424. You are well satisfied then with the prospects of the sugar industry since you made that arrangement? No; one of the things that made us go in for sugar growing in that locality is because the amount of cane now grown in the Mary River district is not sufficient to keep the Yengarie refinery employed fully during the season, and we cannot support the mill for want of a large amount of cane. If we only turn out 2,000 tons of sugar during a year we would have a great loss, whereas if we turned out 5,000 tons a year we would have a gain, because the expenses of management and a lot of the charges are just the same whether we do a large quantity of sugar or a small quantity, and it is only to assist the establishment at Yengarie that we have gone in for the Isis scheme.
7425. What area of land have the Isis farmers promised to grow cane on for you? Already they have promised from 300 to 400 acres in the locality of the site on which we have decided to put our mill. That is for a beginning, but we are quite sure that the area will increase very rapidly, and that we will have the year after next as much as we can possibly manage.
7426. Would the farmers be able to grow cane without black labour? No; I do not think so.
7427. Then what would be the result if they are unable to obtain that labour? I do not know.
7428. *By the Chairman*: What arrangement have you made with the farmers in the Isis scrub? No arrangement further than that we have promised to buy their cane from them if they will grow it. We have undertaken to put a mill there. We have only given our word to that effect.
7429. Then at present no cane is growing in the Isis scrub? No; this year we are delivering cane plants to the farmers in the Isis scrub, and they are going on with the planting at once. We have undertaken to supply all the plants they want. The Isis scrub is a very large scrub, and some of it is very rich.
7430. When you visited the farmers, were they contemplating growing cane with white labour or with the assistance of black? The people there are in hopes that they will get black labour.
7431. And it is solely on that ground that they are beginning to turn their attention to the growth of cane in the way that you have pointed out to us? Yes.
7432. *By Mr. King*: What do the Isis farmers grow at present? Maize.
7433. Do they fancy that it will pay them better to grow sugar? Yes; they are not making anything at the maize growing.
7434. What price do you pay for cane? We have offered them 8s. 6d. per ton for cane delivered at the mill, or 6s. in the field, and we have to cut and cart it ourselves. That is the offer we have now made, it will be subject to alteration afterwards. That is the lowest we intend to give them.

- J. CRAB. 7435. You buy the juice in Bundaberg? Yes.
 28 Feb., 1889. 7436. I suppose you can say what the price is equivalent to per ton of cane. How much do you pay for the juice estimated at per ton of cane? The cane varies a very great deal; because some cane will crush 70 per cent. of juice and another lot will only yield 50 per cent. I cannot say.
 7437. By Mr. Cowley: I believe that you have a complete system of piping for bringing the juice from the various cane-crushing mills to the refinery? Yes.
 7438. Would you state the number of miles of piping? We have about twenty miles, or very nearly, of piping laid under ground.
 7439. Kindly state in detail the process for conveying the juice from these crushing mills to the refinery. —The cane is crushed at the various plantations and the juice thus extracted is mixed with lime so as to preserve it. We mix the juice at the plantations and take its density, and pay the planters for the juice according to its density. It is then pumped through the pipes to the factory by force pumps.
 7440. What is the farthest distance from the refinery of any one crushing mill? About seven miles.
 7441. What is the capacity of your receiving tanks? We have reservoir tanks capable of holding 100,000 gallons.
 7442. During the crushing season how often are those tanks filled? Continuously. We are working the juice as fast as it comes through. We keep as little on hand as we possibly can.
 7443. Do you use coal at the refinery? Yes.
 7444. And charcoal? Yes.
 7445. A large number of bones? Yes.
 7446. And limestone? Yes.
 7447. Then the factory gives employment to a large number of hands outside of the refinery? Yes?
 7448. And a very considerable number of farmers in the district entirely depend upon Millarquin to take their juice from them? Yes.
 7449. By Mr. King: How much coal do you use a year? This year we will have used about 9,000 tons; the year before we used 14,000 tons.
 7450. How do you get it, and where from? From Maryborough by steamer. It goes from Howard to Maryborough by train, and from Maryborough to Bundaberg by steamer.
 7451. Do you burn your own lime? Yes.
 7452. How much limestone do you use in a year? 5,000 tons.
 7453. Where do you get it from and how? From Rockhampton. It is taken to Keppel Bay by tender, and thence by sailing vessel.
 7454. By Mr. Cowley: If you have a central crushing mill on the Isis scrub, do you intend to convey the juice to Yeagarie by pipes? No; we will send the juice by rail.
 7455. Will that give increased traffic to the Government railway? Yes.

ROBERT WRIGHT examined:

- R. Wright. 7456. By the Chairman: What are you? A bookseller in Bundaberg.
 28 Feb., 1889. 7457. Are you a resident in Bundaberg? Yes.
 7458. And you are in business here? Yes.
 7459. How long have you been in town? About seven years.
 7460. You say that you are cognisant with the opinions of working people in town with regard to the kanaka question? I am.
 7461. Have you any suggestions to offer in connection with the object of our inquiry? I have a suggestion to offer, to the effect that when a kanaka's engagement expires he should be compelled to re-engage for a further period of three years, either with his original or some other qualified employer, or else go home with his £5. In view of this, and in view of his being worth more during his second term of servitude, he should be paid more, and this increased pay should be secured to him by law. His increased wages should be, I say, at the rate of 50 per cent., but that is a matter for arrangement. He is worth more and should be given 50 per cent. more. The system of short engagements has caused great discontent amongst the working classes. I know this because I see so many of the working people, the real working classes, and those short engagements are what cause all the discontent. I have no interest in agriculture myself, but I know the subject well because I know the feeling of the people so intimately.
 7462. Speaking as a business man and as a man conversant with the opinions of the people, is the presence of 200 or 300 kanakas in Bundaberg on Saturdays objectionable? Yes it is, without some sort of supervision.
 7463. Do you know if liquor is supplied to them when they come into town on Saturday nights? I know as a matter of fact that it is, but not of my own knowledge. I know that it is supplied to them very largely. The feeling and idea is that this is chiefly done by Chinamen.
 7464. Do you know if the Chinamen's shops are under the surveillance of the police? No; unless they are licensed boarding-houses.
 7465. Do they come under the Health Act? Yes.
 7466. Then it is quite within the province of the municipal council, should those Chinese houses prove objectionable, to withdraw their licenses? Yes; it is.
 7467. Has any application been made to the authorities to do so, on the grounds you have stated? I think there has been. I forget any particular case. Some of the licenses have been withdrawn in deference to public opinion.
 7468. By Mr. King: Do you know if any attempt has been made to give religious instruction to the kanakas? Yes; by Miss Young. Several people buy hymn books from me for the boys, and there are also classes in the Church of England for them every Sunday.
 7469. Do the kanakas attend any of the churches in town? Not as a rule. An odd one or so attends, but not many go there; they go to the Sunday Schools.
 7470. Do you think that the teaching they get effects any improvement on them? I think it does. I have noticed that those boys who come from the Missionary islands are much better conducted than the others, and that the teaching here has an ameliorating effect on them. They come largely to my shop, and I sell them large quantities of tobacco and hymn books. I have crowds of them in on Saturday nights. The most of them seem to be well behaved.
 7471. Are

7471. Are they able to read? I never heard them read anything. They buy hymn books, but I notice when they buy them that they know very little of their contents. They seem to know a few things by rote. They cannot read or write.

7472. *By Mr. Cowley:* Why do you fix on three years as the term for which a kanaka should be re-engaged? It is short enough. It makes a reasonable certainty to an employer who really needs them. 7473. But do you not know that many of the boys re-engage for periods of six or twelve months, so that they may return to their native islands with friends who have come to this country later than they did? I did not know that that was a reason, but I know that the effect of those short engagements is at the root of the discontentment.

7474. But how can it matter, so long as they are legally employed, and return home when their re-engagements are up, whether they engage for six months or three years? Well, that is the opinion of the people.

7475. They should give some reason for their opinion. So long as kanakas are confined to agricultural work, I do not see how the term of re-engagement affects the people? They are not always employed in agriculture—a great many are not. They go outside of agriculture and take contracts for fencing and other things. That is what the working men complain of—that they come into direct competition with themselves, outside of semi-tropical agriculture altogether.

7476. Then it is not the length of the term of re-engagement that the working men object to, but because they come into competition with the working men by being employed by men who have no right to have them? Yes.

7477. Is this the only objection that the working men of Bundaberg have against the kanakas? No; not the only one. There was a very bitter feeling against them once, but it is falling away. The feeling has decreased very considerably of late years, and if the working men could only be made certain that the kanakas would be kept within the lines of semi-tropical agriculture, then it would not be very long before all discontent would die out. The working men begin to see that it is absolutely necessary. In fact they see and so do all reasonable men see, that for the great bulk of the work on a sugar plantation it is absolutely necessary. They object to the short engagement which time-expired boys enter into.

WILLIAM MURRAY COX HICKSON examined:

7478. *By the Chairman:* Are you a member of the Planters' Association, Bundaberg? Yes.

7479. Have you been deputed to attend before the Commissioners to-day and give evidence on their behalf? Yes.

7480. Will you kindly state as briefly as you can what are the views of the Planters' Association generally as regards the present depression in the sugar industry? The first I think is the depression caused by the bounty sugar at home, where the exportation of beet sugar is so great in consequence of being fostered by the action of the different governments on the continent of Europe, which has driven almost the whole of the cane sugar grown in the colonies into other channels for sale. Colonial sugar is also brought very heavily into competition with sugars from China, Java, and Mauritius, where also it is manufactured by cheap labour—cheaper labour than we have in the colonies. Again, we have the present "*Pacific Islanders Act of 1885*," which does away (by clause 11) with the present labour at the end of 1890, and that has had the effect of preventing our making a lot of improvements which otherwise we would have gone on with, and which, in fact, has shaken the confidence of owners; and, as a matter of fact, in this district, investors who have advanced money to the proprietors of plantations are now making arrangements to call up. That, I think, has had more to do with the bad state of the sugar industry just now than anything. If we had that Act repealed I think—and I know the members of the association think so too—that we would go on very much better than we are at present.

7481. What suggestions do the Association offer by which the present depression in the sugar industry can be removed? That we should have clause 11 of the Act repealed. There is another thing: the regulations under that Act, especially the shipping regulations, are very irksome, and it would be a great benefit if they were modified somewhat. The members of the association do not wish to hamper the efficiency of the service—that is the recruiting service—in any way. But it is very hard, if an accident happens on board a boat when they are at the islands, that the boat should immediately have to return home. There is no reason why if a Government agent does cut his throat the vessel should have to come back to port at once. We had a vessel on which the Government agent cut his throat, and this very last trip the Government agent was killed. There is no reason why the captain or the mate should not take up the Government agent's billet for the time being in cases of accident—or some arrangement be made for doing so. A vessel might be out only a very short time, and have only half-a-dozen recruits on board when, because of some accident to the agent, she would have to come back, and all the expenses would have to be paid just the same as if she returned with a shipload. The cost of those kanakas is a very serious item. We are handicapped by having to compete against countries employing cheap black labour, and they are able to produce sugar very much cheaper than we are. The fact is that sugar from Mauritius can be landed in Melbourne at £20 a ton and sold at a profit. We could not do that.

7482. When you say that the Association desires the repeal of clause 11 of the *Polynesian Labourers Act*, do you understand that it is to be a repeal indefinitely? Of course what they desire is an absolute repeal, but an extension of time would satisfy the members for a time. If sugar is to be gone on with other labour must be found to supply the place of kanakas.

7483. Do you think that the Planters' Association would be satisfied supposing an extension of time were granted? Yes. That is, of course, failing an absolute repeal.

7484. What do you think would be the effect on the sugar industry of Bundaberg supposing the Legislature should refuse either to repeal or extend the Act? It would be extinguished.

7485. Do you give that as a thoughtfully prepared opinion, or merely haphazard? I have thought it over and over again and again. Failing cheap labour, it will be extinguished. My opinion is that we cannot go on growing sugar unless we have cheap and reliable labour.

7486. *By Mr. King:* Is there not a distillery now being erected in Bundaberg? Yes.

7487. Are you one of the directors of the company? I am chairman of the directors.

7488. What

R. Wright.
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W. M. C.
Hickson.
28 Feb, 1889.

- W. M. C. Hickson.
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7488. What price will the distillery give for molasses? That all depends on the price of spirits.
7489. I suppose you calculated on buying at a price? We have calculated, and started the company, intending to give about 3d. a gallon for molasses delivered at the works.
7490. Will that make any appreciable increase on the profits of the plantations? Very small. They will be able to make a profit out of the molasses, which have always been thrown away before.
7491. How much would the profit come to in your own case? It would have come to about £150 in my case last year.
7492. Well, that would be a help? Yes; it has all been wasted hitherto.
7493. It has been suggested that the kanakas should be kept out of town. Do you think it would be easy to do so? Well, there would be some little difficulty at first which could be afterwards got over. The difficulty would be in making the boys understand it.
7494. It has been suggested that some boys be picked out of each plantation as special constables, to be placed over the others, and have some authority over them, and that when they come into town these men should have charge of a gang of them and be answerable for their behaviour, and bring them back all right. What do you think of the idea? We have had that suggestion before our Association already, and we are not all of the same opinion on the subject. I myself think it would place the boys in a very invidious position with the others. I think there is a better way by which the difficulty could be got over, and that is by allowing only a certain number of boys into town from one plantation at a time.
7495. But do you think if it were made law that they could not enter into the boundary of the municipality that you would be able to break them into it? No difficulty whatever. The difficulty is that there is no law. We have consulted the police magistrate about it.
7496. I suppose the planters would be very glad to keep the boys out of town? Very glad indeed.
7497. Have you found that they get liquor on the plantations, or is it only when they come into town? I have never known them get liquor on the plantations.
7498. I suppose it is a great cause of trouble with the boys? It is the entire cause of trouble. If they are kept without liquor, there could not be a more peaceable lot of people than they are.

EDWARD TURNER EXAMINED:

- E. Turner.
28 Feb., 1890.
7499. *By the Chairman:* What are you, Mr. Turner? I am a farmer, residing in the Bundaberg district.
7500. How many acres have you under cultivation? Altogether 250 acres; not all under cultivation, but about 120 acres are cultivated.
7501. How many acres have you under sugar cane? 110 acres.
7502. You have already supplied answers to the printed questions sent to you? Yes.
7503. Can you state to the Commission the rate of interest that you received from your farm last year, on the capital invested? I am not well up in figures. I cleared £700 after paying all expenses.
7504. You state in answer to question 33, as to the cause of the present depressed state of the sugar industry "dry seasons" only. Are there not other causes? Certainly; no doubt about it. I have very little to do with the price of sugar, which has, I daresay, had something to do with it, because I sell my juice.
7505. Then the only remedy you can suggest is irrigation? Yes. Irrigation will be no use until we have it all stumped and cultivated.
7506. Are you not in the Woongarra scrub? Yes.
7507. Is not most of the land there at present stumped? About half of it properly.
7508. What would the farmers be prepared to pay per acre, supposing they had a supply of water with which to irrigate? I consider £2 an acre would be reasonable.
7509. Then if the Government were to undertake a comprehensive irrigation scheme you would be prepared to pay £2 an acre per annum for irrigating your farm? Yes.
7510. Do you know if any number of farmers in the Woongarra scrub would be prepared to plant cane if they could get their farms irrigated for £2 an acre per annum? Some of them would, but I can't answer for all. It means a certainty of getting a crop to a certain extent.
7511. Then taking it as a whole you are quite satisfied with your prospects as a sugar grower? Yes; with moderate seasons.
7512. Are you of opinion that it will be necessary to employ certain labour to grow sugar profitably? Anyone who has a good piece of land has it all stumped and irrigated and sells juice to the refinery: I think that the kanaka labour with him must die a natural death in course of time—that is, after the land is fit for superior cultivation.
7513. At present are you employing kanakas? Yes.
7514. Suppose the Polynesian Act was carried into effect and kanaka labour put a stop to at the end of 1890, how would it affect you? It would affect me very much for, say, the next two years.
7515. Suppose that the Act was extended for five years what effect would it have on you? I would be perfectly satisfied; it would have quite a satisfactory effect.
7516. Do you think you would be able to do without them by that time? Yes; I am sure that they will die a natural death by that time, as far as the farmers who work for the refinery are concerned.
7517. Do you say that in view of being able to obtain a supply of water for irrigation? Yes.
7518. Is that the opinion of your neighbours as well as of yourself? It is the opinion of one of them; I cannot speak for them all.
7519. Have you ever talked the matter over with them? Yes, with one.
7520. And his opinion coincided with your own? Yes.
7521. What kind of crop have you for this coming season? I shall have no crop at all.
7522. And in view of the present disastrous season you are a thorough supporter of an irrigation scheme? I have always been so, even previous to this.
7523. In your return you do not give us the number of tons of sugar you were paid for by the Millarquin people? I crushed eighty acres of cane for myself, and for that I obtained payment which averaged £24 an acre. That is equivalent to about two tons of juice to the acre. The remainder that I crushed for others averaged £23 odd per acre.
7524. *By Mr. Cowley:* Was that stand-over crop? Three-parts of it was.
7525. How old was it? Some of it was three years old and some two years.

7526. When

7526. When you say that you cleared £700 last year, does that mean after paying interest on outlay? E. Turner.
No; £700 after paying all hands. .
7527. Do you allow yourself a salary? No, nothing.
7528. Then the amount of your wages would have to be deducted from the £700 if you were working for anyone else? Yes; my sons assist me, and the missus, and one of the daughters help me. I have made no allowance for salary for any of us.
7529. Then really if you had to pay for the work done by your wife, sons, daughters, and yourself, there would be very little left to pay interest on outlay; that is if it were your own place, and you had to pay a manager? I would have to pay a manager, say, £250 a year at least. It would all make a considerable hole in the £700.
7530. What would the total assistance of your sons, and wife, and daughter amount to? At least £350.

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WILLIAM WOOLLEY examined:

7531. By the Chairman: You are a member of the Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce? Yes.
7532. Are you deputed by the Chamber of Commerce to give evidence before the Commission? Yes.
7533. Are you in business in Bundaberg? Yes.
7534. How long have you been here? Nine years.
7535. What business do you carry on? Hardware, ironmongery, and plumbing business.
7536. Are you acquainted with the sugar industry in this district? Yes.
7537. How does it affect the trade of Bundaberg? It is our mainstay. We do about two-thirds of our business with the sugar people. We do about £40,000 with the sugar plantations.
7538. What number of hands do you employ? About thirty-five.
7539. All Europeans? Yes.
7540. And are there skilled mechanics amongst them? Yes.
7541. Do you find any decrease in your business in consequence of the depressed condition of the sugar industry? Yes; considerable.
7542. How long have you been suffering from this decrease? Not long; about six months.
7543. Do you attribute it to the drought? Yes; as affecting the industry at present.
7544. Has the Chamber of Commerce, as a representative body, discussed the present condition of the sugar industry? Yes; they have.
7545. Have they formulated any series of causes which have led to the present depression, and if so could you state them? I can tell you what they have done. They have tried to bring about reciprocity with Victoria, which we think would tend to increase trade.
7546. Have they not considered the causes of the depression? Yes; we have considered the causes.
7547. What do you consider are the causes? The primary cause is the low price of sugar. That is one of the causes which led us to try to bring about a reciprocity treaty with Victoria, who are large consumers of sugar. The large bulk of our sugar goes to Victoria, and there comes into competition with cheap sugar from Java and Mauritius. The sugar from those countries is manufactured by cheap labour. In some instances our sugar has to compete in Victoria with bounty-fed sugar.
7548. What suggestions have the Chamber of Commerce to offer by which the industry could be improved? That is a question that has not been properly thrashed out in the Chamber of Commerce. It consists of the principal merchants and townspeople who have not got any knowledge of the sugar industry. I do not suppose that 10 per cent. of the townspeople have any actual knowledge of sugar growing.
7549. Is it not a fact that the prosperity of Bundaberg depends mainly on the sugar industry? Yes; that is our mainstay. One of the great causes of the depression at the present time is the fact that the banks and financial men will not help the planters and sugar growers over their difficulties. A lot of the planters are in very serious straits just now and they cannot pay their accounts. I cannot give you their names. When I ask them to do so they say, "We cannot get any more money from the bank managers owing to the uncertainty of the labour question, and we do not know whether we will be allowed to carry on. The managers say, 'You will have no crop next year, and we cannot put our hands in our pockets to assist you.'"
7550. Why do the banks refuse any further advances on their estates? Owing to the fact that, by the Act which has been passed, it is probable that the employment of kanakas will come to an end in about a year or two's time, and, considering that they do not expect any crop next year, after which they cannot get any more black labour, the banks cannot see where they are going to get their money from.
7551. Does this information come from the Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce as representative of the commercial interests of the town? No.
7552. Then you only give your statement upon hearsay? Not only on hearsay; but I can speak from the experience of a large business, and as a business man doing business with almost every planter.
7553. What would be the effect on your business if the Act which sets forth that the importation of kanakas must cease at the end of 1890 were put in force? I think I would want to sell out.
7554. What would be the effect upon the commercial prosperity of Bundaberg in the event of the Act being put in force? Do you mean in the event of the Polynesian Act being put in force?
7555. Yes? I do not think that half-a-dozen plantations could carry on; and corn growing is a failure. I am a farmer also. I am running a farm, unfortunately, and I grow corn. It would have the effect of closing up most of the business places. It would close up mine, and we have invested £18,000 in our business.
7556. Then, in your opinion, the entire prosperity of Bundaberg depends on the continuance of the sugar industry? Certainly.
7557. Speaking as a business man, do you think that if the present Polynesian Act were amended, and clause 11, which does away with the employment of kanaka labour after 1890, extended, it would have any effect upon the future prosperity of Bundaberg? It would be a very important event in the welfare of this place, because the banks would, in face of the drought, help the planters to tide over the bad season.
7558. Do your employes ever object to the employment of kanakas on the plantations? No; on the contrary.

W. Woolley.

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7559. Does

W. Woolley. 7559. Does the very existence of your business depend upon their employment? Yes; two-thirds of my business is done with the plantations. At present I am discharging men every week because we
 28 Feb., 1889. have nothing to do. The planters have not been able to do anything; they cannot, because they have no money.

7560. Supposing the Polynesian Act were amended, would that have the effect of restoring commercial confidence in Bundaberg? Yes.

7561. If the Government were to introduce a comprehensive scheme for irrigation, would it have a good effect on the district? Yes; it would have a splendid effect on all the plantations of Queensland, but of Bundaberg in particular. That is what we suffer from. Ever since I have been in Queensland there has always been a drought, more or less. We have at times had abundance of rain, and then no rain for a month or two.

7562. Would the farmers be prepared to pay a reasonable price per acre for watering their land? I have heard them say so. They have already signified their willingness to contribute from £1 to £5 an acre for water. It is very questionable whether they could make it pay at £5 an acre. If the Government were to bring in a Bill which would enable farmers to obtain small loans for irrigation purposes, it would be of the greatest benefit. I can speak from experience on this point, as we have supplied several farmers with irrigation plants ourselves; and at the present time we have irrigation plants coming out from home; but the great difficulty is that these men have no money, and we have to become bankers for them. It comes rather hard on an individual firm to advance those persons money. I have only within the last six weeks had to take back an irrigation plant from a man, because he could not get sufficient accommodation from the bank to pay his first instalment on it, and I could not help him.

7563. Is there really a desire on the part of the farmers to try irrigation if they could get monetary assistance? Yes. I have several kinds of irrigation plants coming out from home, and I have already received four or five inquiries about them, which I have no doubt will lead to business. Many small farmers cannot provide £350 for an irrigation plant, and if he has to mortgage his farm to obtain money to purchase one he has to pay a very heavy percentage, whereas were the Government to come to their assistance and let them have small loans at 5 per cent. a great many farmers in the district would at once go in for irrigation. I am working a farm myself of fifty acres, thirty acres of which are under cultivation. I have not gone in for irrigation yet, but I am going in for one of these irrigation plants which are coming out to us. If I have any success this year I will save £200—half the cost of the plant. These plants cost from £250 to £400.

THOMAS ALFRED SILVERWOOD examined:

T. A. Silverwood. 7564. By the Chairman: What are you? I am a draughtsman and practical engineer residing in Bundaberg.

28 Feb., 1889. 7565. And you place before the Commission the model of a practical apparatus for cutting standing cane? Yes.

[NOTE.—The Chairman of the Commission then introduced Mr. Silverwood to the members of the Planters' Association, who were invited to be present to see the working of the model. The modus operandi of Mr. Silverwood's cane-cutter were fully explained. The members of the Planters' Association subsequently held a meeting, at which Mr. Silverwood was present, and so favourably impressed were they with the machine that they promised that gentlemen monetary assistance to enable him to have a full-sized working machine made.]

WILLIAM MEWCOMBE AITKENSON examined:

W. M. Aitkenson. 7566. By the Chairman: What are you? A farmer.
 28 Feb., 1889. 7567. Do you reside in the Bundaberg district? Yes; at Gingin.
 7568. What is the extent of your selection? From 2,000 to 2,100 acres.
 7569. How many acres have you under cultivation? About 100.

7570. What do you cultivate? Lucerne and maize, and a little bit of sugar cane; about three acres.

7571. Do you grow the sugar cane for any special purpose? Yes, for fodder.

7572. What returns do you get from your farm; how many tons of lucerne do you get to the acre? In good seasons about 4 tons.

7573. Have you made any at all this year? I have in a small way. I only got about 3 cwt. to the acre.

7574. What does your maize crop yield? It gives about 40 bushels to the acre.

7575. How many crops do you get in one year? Only one, with white labour.

7576. What labour do you employ on the farm? Only white labour. We are not allowed to employ black labour.

7577. Are your farming operations successful financially? Well, sometimes a profit, and sometimes a loss. This year a loss.

7578. Do you combine grazing with your farming? I do.

7579. Then keeping cattle assists you to keep your farm? Yes.

7580. Who do you dispose of your produce to? Some of it goes to Mount Perry, some to Messrs. Buss and Co., and some to Mr. Duffy.

7581. Have you reason to suppose that it goes to the sugar plantations? I could not form any idea as to what becomes of it.

7582. Is the condition of the farming industry a prosperous one? It is a question entirely of weather. In a season like this it is very bad.

7583. By Mr. King: So far as the farming industry is concerned, you have nothing to complain of in this district except the seasons? The time the kanakas were taken away from the farmers I complained a great deal; and I think very justly.

7584. But you do not want kanakas to make your industry a success? Since the kanakas were taken away I have not put any more land under cultivation.

7585. Do you consider that it does not pay to work a farm with white labour? Not entirely.

7586. What would it cost you to clear the scrub? I can get it done for from £4 to £5 an acre. But that is merely preliminary expense.

7587. Is

7587. Is the cultivation for the first three or four years very heavy? Yes.

7588. And it does not pay to do it with white labour? No; it does not.

7589. Is there anything that the farmers in this district wish the Government to do for them to assist them? I am not instructed by the farmers to lay anything before you, but I can speak from my own experience. I believe that the tobacco growing industry could be made to pay, if the Government would help it by giving information to the grower such as is given in America. It is grown by a neighbour of mine. No one seems to understand the subject thoroughly.

7590. *By the Chairman:* Tobacco is grown successfully in New South Wales by white labour? It could be grown here with white labour where a man has a family to help him.

7591. *By Mr. King:* Is there any tobacco grown in this district? Yes; by a neighbour of mine who is growing it successfully.

7592. How many acres has he under tobacco? Somewhere about three acres.

7593. When was that? The season before last. He made some £30 or £40 out of his three acres, which were worked by himself and family.

7594. *By Mr. Cowley:* Have you a dairy in connection with your farm? Only for my own family.

7595. Do you find that white men are willing to work with the hoe in the field? They would be just now, when there are plenty of men and a scarcity of work, and in such a case they are easy enough to get; but when there is a demand for them, and plenty of work offers they will not do hoe work in the field.

7596. What wages did you pay them? I only employed one man, who got 16s. a week at first, and then 18s. a week and I found him. These men require to be well fed.

7597. How long do those men, as a rule, stay with you? I had one man for a year, and another for about a year. They left because they were tired of the place and wanted a change.

7598. Have you had any experience in sugar growing other than growing it for fodder? I had a property in Woongarra, and had forty acres of cane in. I sold it.

7599. What labour did you employ for it? Kanakas.

7600. Would white men do the work? White men could do some of the work. White men can't stand trashing and cutting at certain times of the year; they can't do the work so well as the kanakas. Even if white men could stand hoeing and trashing they object to that kind of work.

7601. *By the Chairman:* And you are of opinion that kanaka labour should be employed in the farming industry of Bundaberg? The farming industry may be entirely maintained by very small men, almost a class of paupers. These pauper farmers will have the work done by themselves and their wives and children, or else have that portion done by coloured labour that cannot be done by white labour.

7602. How is it that it is done in other parts of the colony? I cannot tell you. I can only give you my own experience.

7603. Would you be in favour of giving the farmers of Bundaberg black labour, and withholding it from the farmers in other parts of the colony? I would not withdraw it from other parts of the colony.

7604. But you are advocating that? Do you allude to the Darling Downs?

7605. I allude to the Darling Downs and elsewhere? But there all the land is stumped and they have nothing to do but to put the plough in.

7606. You might, but it is not all stumped and cleared even on the Downs? If it paid me to put the land under cultivation I would do so.

CHARLES FALKNER examined:

7607. *By the Chairman:* What are you? A planter and farmer.

7608. Have you sent in a paper? Yes; I omitted to mention irrigation, which is most essential.

7609. Are you of opinion that a scheme of irrigation would assist the sugar industry of this district? Yes; it is one of the most important things in it for farming generally, not only sugar.

7610. Then you appear before the Commission to supplement that part of the answers to the printed questions? Yes.

7611. Are you prepared, as one of the landholders round Bundaberg, to pay so much per acre per annum for a supply of water to irrigate your land? Yes.

7612. To what extent would you go per acre? I would willingly pay £1 per acre per annum.

7613. That would be £261 per annum? Yes; I would pay £1 an acre for every acre that wanted it, or even more if required.

7614. Are any of your neighbours prepared to do the same? I have heard several of them speak about it, and they all said that such a system was wanted.

7615. Have the farmers discussed the means of going into an extensive irrigation scheme for themselves? I do not think so.

7616. If the Government were to establish irrigation trusts in the various farming districts of the colony, whereby small loans could be advanced to farmers, either individually or co-operatively, would it be taken advantage of? In a place like this it would have to be co-operative. We would not be able to get sufficient water to irrigate our own land without going a very long distance for it.

7617. *By Mr. Cowley:* In your answers to the printed questions you say that a white man could cultivate twenty acres of land. Do you mean to say that he could hoe and plant and cut the cane on twenty acres? I mean when the land is clear, and a man can work with a horse.

HENRY CHARLES ARTHUR YOUNG examined:

7618. *By the Chairman:* You are one of the owners of Fairymead Plantation? Yes.

7619. And also a member of the Bundaberg Planters' Association? Yes.

7620. And you have been deputed by the Association to appear before the Commission and give evidence on their behalf? Yes.

7621. Will you be kind enough to state what the views of the association are as to the causes of the present depression in the sugar industry? Well, the Planters' Association think that under the present circumstances we can't carry this industry on successfully against the foreign competition that we have to contend against without the assistance of a certain amount of Polynesian labour. That is at present.

They,

C. Falkner.

28 Feb., 1889.

H. C. A.
Young.

28 Feb., 1889.

H. C. A.
Young.

28 Feb., 1889.

They, therefore, hope that we will be allowed to go on recruiting in the meantime. They feel that the same argument that was used five years ago, when it was proposed that the labour should terminate at once, whereas five years' time was given with the view of some alternative system coming in, applies to the question at the present time, perhaps with greater force, because lately we have gone through some very hard seasons, especially the last one, the effect of which, in some cases, has been very severe; and very little time is left us to try and pull back some of the capital invested in machinery and the money lost owing to bad seasons. I think that the planters of this district are not altogether wedded to this class of labour; they only say that at present there is no apparent alternative for them. But more especially the planters of the district feel that if they could be placed on an equality with foreign competing centres, such as Java, Hong Kong, and Mauritius, by means of protective duties, or a reciprocity treaty; or, better still, by federation of the colonies, which would result in one Customs house for Australasia and protection for all the products of the colonies, or at any rate those which could be grown to advantage in the colonies—they might possibly then be in a position to work with a considerably less amount of this labour, if not to do without it all together. In fact, it resolves itself into a matter of cost. Anything can be done at a certain cost, but at present the cost would be too great. We have to compete with Hong Kong, where they have the cheapest of coloured labour, Chinese labour; with Java, where they have the Malay labourers; and with Mauritius, where they have the Indian coolie; and the natural market for the sugar grown in these countries has been glutted by the action of continental nations in regard to the bounty-fed sugars, and has forced them to look for a market in the Australian colonies at a price at which they would not otherwise have done. We do not get bounty-fed sugar here, but we feel the effect of it locally owing to the European markets being glutted by that sugar. The Planters' Association would like to clearly point out to the Commission, that we do not even require a protective duty on sugar to exist in Queensland, because the very large excess of production over demand in the colony makes the competition between the growers in the colony so keen as to cause the price to fall very often lower in the colony than it is outside, or to make it no more than 4s. or 5s. a ton more. To prove this, I might add that, out of the 2,000 tons of sugar made by one firm, fully five-sixths were exported. The Planters' Association feel that if something could be done to secure us a fair footing in the Australian markets, it would go a great way to solve this very question of labour. Then, again, we think that if something could be done by the Government to advance money to those districts requiring water schemes, that, again, would be a great factor in the solving of this question. But the association think that, until something of this kind can be inaugurated, it will be a very great hardship if we are forced violently to change our present method, especially considering the very large sums of money we have laid out on machinery which is necessary. There is no doubt that if the matter could be settled one way or the other shortly, it would be a great benefit to the industry. We are suffering now from uncertainty, and that checks all sorts of improvements and extensions entirely, for which there is great room, and if something could be done it would be an enormous relief to us.

7622. Then your statement combines the suggestions which the Association have to offer for the relief of the industry? Yes. The Association suggest that in the meantime there should be some extension of the Polynesian Act, and also some legislative action whereby we will be able to obtain a better position in the colonial markets, and also we trust that the Government will go in for some comprehensive irrigation scheme. These three things seem to be the main suggestions. We do not want the people outside of our industry to pay one farthing for the irrigation of our plantations. We would pay the interest on the outlay.

7623. Your plantations being so near Bundaberg, you are more or less identified with the prosperity of the town of Bundaberg? Yes.

7824. What effect has the sugar industry on the commercial prosperity of Bundaberg? I think it has made it what it is, and is supporting it in its present state—the sugar industry and farming. Farming has a certain influence, but the Customs export returns will show the preponderance the export of sugar has over all other commodities.

7625. Suppose the Legislature should adhere to its determination not to interfere with the 11th clause of the Polynesian Act of 1885, what effect would that have on your plantation at Fairymead? Unless some alternative scheme comes up which will give us equivalent advantage to the present system, we will have to shut up; we would have to close our mill. We have been hoping to get a few good seasons, so that we might get back some of the capital we have sunk in our mills.

7626. Do you think that an extension of the present system of Polynesian labour would have any beneficial effect on the interests of the sugar plantations? Yes; it would. It would ease matters very materially.

7627. Then, in your opinion, the future prosperity of Bundaberg, and the people who are residing here, will largely depend on what action is taken by the Legislature with regard to this question? Yes; the Planters' Association of this district consider that owing to the large number of white people who are employed in and about the plantations, and whose existence depends on the working of the plantations, the damage done to them would be quite equal in proportion to the damage to the owners. Statistics show that they largely benefit by the continuance of the industry. Queensland is not behind the average cane-growing countries in their mills and machinery. We are a long way ahead of most nations. Compare the results with those of the new process—the Despesis process. We would not go in for diffusion unless they improved it very much. We are doing quite as well as some statistics published show can be done with diffusion. We have double crushers and heavy maceration.

FRIDAY, 1 MARCH, 1889.

MARY RIVER DISTRICT.

(At Maryborough.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

PETER RICHARDSON examined:

7628. *By Mr. King:* You were formerly manager of Antigua plantation, were you not? Yes.
 7629. Can you state what was the amount of capital invested in Antigua plantation at the time you had charge of it? When I left the plantation in 1881 the capital amounted to £22,000. That had been invested in the property.

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 Richardson.
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7630. In all the machinery erected at that time? Yes.

WILLIAM FREDERICK HARRINGTON examined;

7631. *By the Chairman:* You are managing director of Messrs. Walker and Co., Limited? Yes.
 7632. How long have you been in Maryborough? About sixteen years.
 7633. Have you made machinery in connection with the sugar plantations? Yes; not so much lately as we would like

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7634. What used to be your output per annum of machinery that has been supplied to the sugar plantations? Between the years 1871 or 1872 and 1877 or 1878 I should think we averaged about £12,000 a year.

7635. When did you first begin to notice a diminution in your returns? I think about 1879; I should think it was ten years ago—or nine years ago would be more like it.

7636. Are you acquainted with the sugar industry in the district of Maryborough? Yes; very well.

7637. Is it in a very depressed condition at present? Very depressed indeed.

7638. Can you state from your own personal knowledge the cause of the depression? Well I think I can give some of the causes. The principal cause has been the uncertainty of reliable labour. That is, the regulations or the Act governing the importation of South Sea Island labour have always been—the result of which I would consider to be that the planters have become half-hearted, and that capitalists are constantly tightening or withdrawing capital from the assistance of the planter. I would look on that as one of the chief reasons. I think the second cause would be the fact of people going into sugar growing without means, and many having means, but without the knowledge of the requirements; and they have had insufficient machinery—that is, machinery unequal to the necessities of the work. They come to our place and order little sugar mills and small appliances, when it has been proved to the satisfaction of everybody that a mill should be a powerful one, and that there should be double crushing instead of single crushing; that cane should go through a second time, by which operation it has been proved that 10 per cent. more juice has been saved. This 10 per cent. loss has crushed out those people who went into sugar without sufficient means and knowledge. For causes of depression I put labour first, and insufficient appliances second.

7639. *By Mr. King:* Are those insufficient appliances owing to want of capital? Yes, and want of a knowledge of the requirements to take the last particle of saccharine from what was going into mills.

7640. *By the Chairman:* Has not the low price of sugar something to do with the depression? The low price of sugar should be taken up as the commercial view of it, and has a great deal to do with it, no doubt. But it has been shown that whenever the conditions have been favourable, and labour reliable obtainable, and the machinery of the best class, and irrigation carried on, that sugar, even at the present low price, can be made a payable article. I have been part owner of a plantation in Bundaberg for four years, and we have no lack of capital, and the land is all under the plough, and in other regards every condition is fairly well fulfilled, and we have been able to get reliable labour from time to time, and we have had a good manager and good machinery, and it pays. That is, it pays interest on the capital invested, but leaves no surplus. It pays interest on every shilling invested in it, and enables us to write off something for depreciation—something like £300 or £400 a year; and so we go on. But that is because every condition is fulfilled. Our machinery might be better, though we are engineers ourselves, but it is not likely that we will launch out not knowing what the labour conditions are going to be after next year.

7641. Do you know if any of the soil in the Maryborough district shows signs of exhaustion? I have heard that after constant cropping it does show signs of exhaustion.

7642. Is not the frost a very great enemy of the planters in this district? Yes. It has been found to be serious, but where good machinery has been put up, they would be able to clear the frosted cane off rapidly. If a plantation has sufficient machinery, the whole of the frosted cane could be treated very soon after it was frosted.

7643. *By Mr. King:* That is matured cane? Yes.

7644. But how about young cane? It would have to go in next year again.

7645. That year it would be spoilt? I am not sufficiently conversant with the growth of cane to say. I know that when we get our cane frosted, it is put through immediately, and our manager tells us that the loss is very small. The cane is injured not destroyed.

7646. *By the Chairman:* Do you consider that the commercial prosperity of Maryborough has suffered from the depression in the sugar industry? I do.

7647. To any very large extent? Well, our industries are so varied, and our resources are so considerable, that I would not say it does to a large extent. But the industry is in a terrible state of depression; the output has fallen from about 4,000 to 5,000 tons of sugar to about 1,500 tons. That is the extent of the loss. We lose say 3,500 tons of sugar, and all the labour connected with the raising of it.

7648. You

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7648. You are aware that the importation of kanakas ceases on 31st December, 1890. What do you think will be the effect upon the sugar industry in this district supposing that Act is enforced? I think it would practically, if not actually, stop it. I do not think we could possibly attempt to grow sugar in this district without reliable and cheap labour.

7649. *By Mr. King*: You have been acquainted with the Urangan Sugar Company? Yes.

7650. You made the machinery for the company? Yes.

7651. For whom was the machinery made? For two Danish farmers named Hansen and Jorgensen.

7652. Were they attempting to grow sugar with white labour? Yes; white labour, and a little South Sea Island labour.

7653. How long did they try the experiment? Just for one season. They only got one crop.

7654. What was the result? They lost everything.

7655. What was the area of their holding? It was about 800 acres; but the area of their crop would not exceed thirty-five acres.

7656. After they failed the Urangan company was formed to acquire the mill? Yes; as a limited company to work the mill and extend the cultivation.

7657. Did the company work their mill as a central mill, or did they cultivate their own cane? They purchased some cane and crushed it as at a central mill. It was very bad cane.

7658. How much cane did they cultivate themselves? They had about seventy acres under crop when they collapsed.

7659. How many of those small farmers were growing for the mill from whom the company expected to get cane? There were ten or twelve farmers in connection with it who sold cane to the Urangan company's mill. The area they cultivated was very small.

7660. What price did the mill pay for the cane? 10s. per ton delivered at the mill. I am not sure whether they did not pay from 10s. to 12s. delivered at the mill.

7661. How long was the mill carried on under that system? Two or three seasons.

7662. What was the result? They showed a steady loss.

7663. What has become of the company? It collapsed and the machinery was removed. The company went insolvent and is in liquidation, and the machinery has been removed.

7664. How did the farmers who were growing cane from the mill do out of the arrangement? They simply had one, two, or ten acres of cane, which they grew on speculation and sold.

7665. Did it appear to pay them? Did they extend their cultivation? Yes; when they got 10s. or 12s. for the cane they were contented. They were quite contented, I believe, at that rate.

7666. Are there any more mills in the scrub? Yes, two mills; one worked by Stutz Brothers, and the other by Boyle & Martin.

7667. Are those mills in working order? Boyle Martin's was last year, but I do not think Stutz's was. I consider that one of the causes—I would be sorry to say the *principal* cause—of the failure of the sugar industry is inadequate machinery and extravagant management. I am speaking of the company and Hansen and Jorgensen. The latter failed because they had not one farthing of capital. They never paid one farthing for their machinery. The company lost from £3,000 to £4,000.

7668. I suppose it was only a small mill? Yes; these Danish farmers bought it, and started without any capital, and with insufficient appliances, and it was carried on to the detriment of everybody connected with it. Insufficient machinery has a great deal to do with the misfortunes of sugar planters.

7669. *By Mr. Cusley*: When speaking of insufficient machinery, are you confining yourself to the Maryborough district? Yes.

7670. The illustration you have given was at Bundaberg. Is it not much better soil in Bundaberg than in the Mary River district? I was referring to the Bonna Sugar Plantation. It is up the Burnett River, higher up than Bundaberg, opposite to Palmer's. It is not in the Woongarra scrub. It is fairly good soil; but certain soil on the Mary River is better.

7671. Is it subject to frosts there at all? Yes, at Bonna; but very slightly.

7672. As much as in the Mary River district? I should not think so.

7673. Is it not a fact that the average yield of cane per acre has been much heavier in Bundaberg than the average yield on the Mary? I do not think so. I could give you the actual yield from year to year at Bundaberg. I know there are plantations on the Mary River that have yielded much higher results than in the Bundaberg district, taking it for four years. The average does not exceed, taking it for the four years, 30 cwt. of sugar to the acre. But I am speaking from memory.

7674. Speaking of insufficient machinery, do you include Yengarie and Millaquin? I did not say juice mills at all. I referred more to sugar-making appliances. I consider the appliances at Yengarie and Millaquin good, but there are several juice-extracting works on the Mary River that are not efficient and they come under the same category. They do not take all the juice out of the sugar cane.

7675. Do you know whether the Yengarie people are prepared to allow those who crush for them to macerate their megas? I am not conversant with the fact.

7676. Do they manufacture sugar at Bonna plantation or send the juice to Millaquin? It is a manufacturing plant.

7677. What was the cost of the manufactory at Urangan? Very little indeed, to start with. They got a vacuum pan afterwards. It was not more than £1,200, and, with the vacuum pan at £800, it would be £2,000 altogether.

7678. If they only had seventy acres of cane—thirty-five acres at first and seventy afterwards—to crush, do you not think the cause of the failure was owing to the very small amount of cane to be manipulated? No; because that was supplemented by the farmers, some of whom supplied from two acres to ten acres, which was sufficient, as the capacity of the mill only allowed them to work about 100 acres. The rollers were only 30 inches long by 18 inches in diameter.

7679. Do you think that the appliances at the Antigua mill were complete for manufacturing sugar? Yes; with some additions it would be equal to Bonna, the one I speak of as being fairly successful.

7680. I am speaking of the manufacture of sugar? Yes; it would be equal to Bonna if filter presses and some other small things were added. Our experience of the filter press is that it saves 10 per cent.

7681. *By the Chairman*: What suggestions can you offer by which the sugar industry of Maryborough can be improved? I think the first thing would have to be freer access for reliable labour. The planters

must

must be able to obtain reliable labour at a low rate. This I consider answer No. 1. No. 2 is that no one should attempt to go in for sugar growing who has not experience and capital to enable him to get the very best appliances—the best labour-saving appliances—so as to fulfil every condition necessary to work the industry at a profit. That, of course, you cannot do by Act of Parliament; you can give reliable labour by Act of Parliament, but not the other thing. As far as the impoverishment of soil is concerned, I do not lay much stress on that, because it can be remedied. Irrigation is another thing that must be gone in for. Anyone with capital who is trying to work the industry at a profit will see that there is not sufficient moisture in the earth.

7682. What was the value of the mill Messrs. Hansen and Jorgensen had? I do not think that, with buildings and machinery and all complete, it would have exceeded £2,500.

7683. Did the company that followed add any more machinery? Yes; but at the time Hansen and Jorgensen had it, it did not represent the value I have just stated.

7684. What was the value of the mill when Hansen and Jorgensen had it? Reckoning all it would not exceed £1,600.

7685. Then you are not surprised at their failure? No; I said so all along, although some of my own money was going into it. I really think that these Danish farmers could grow cane in small patches and that a central mill managed well, and economically, the same as any other commercial business, could be made to pay.

7686. Could a supply of water be obtained from the Mary, if the Government proposed a scheme for irrigation? Yes.

7687. To irrigate a large area? Yes.

7688. What price do you suppose the farmers would be willing to pay per acre per annum for having their land irrigated? I am not able to answer that.

7689. From your personal knowledge of the farmers in this district do you think that if irrigation were offered they would be willing to pay a fair price per acre to have their land irrigated? Yes.

7690. Then if facilities were offered in the direction of irrigation, cane growing would still be an industry in this district? Yes.

7691. *By Mr. King*: You said that you thought the Danes would be able to grow cane for a central mill. Is that because they are satisfied with a very small return? Yes.

7692. Would they be satisfied with much less than the wages of ordinary white men? Yes.

7693. Could cane be profitably grown if the labourers had to receive the ordinary wages of white men in this district? I do not think so.

7694. Do you think that those Danes and Germans would be satisfied to work for little more than their rations on their own land? Yes; all the members of the family assist.

7695. But do they make fair wages? No; they only make a living.

7696. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say that you believe that one great essential to the success of the sugar industry is coloured labour—cheap and reliable labour. As an employer yourself of a large number of white men, and being well acquainted with the district and neighbourhood, can you tell us whether there is any great objection raised by the working men to the introduction of these coloured labourers? What I say is only my own impression, and that is that they are very much opposed to it. But I have avoided asking any of my employes any questions touching on that matter or on politics.

7697. Do you know the feeling of the public here? My impression is that they are opposed to it. That matter could be ascertained in a very satisfactory way by examining two or three employes from each of the industries in town. It is the old howl, "Queensland for the white man!"

ROBERT CRAN, junr., examined:

7698. *By the Chairman*: You are part owner and manager of the Yengarie Sugar Refinery? I am R. Cran, junr., manager of the refinery.

7699. How long have you been in that capacity? About twelve years.

7700. Do you purchase juice from the surrounding growers on the Mary River? Yes.

7701. Do you have the juice brought to the refinery in pipes? By pipes and barges.

7702. What was the amount of sugar manufactured at the refinery last year? About 1,500 tons.

7703. Can you tell us the number of cane growers who supply you with juice? About twenty-five.

7704. What amount of capital is invested in the refinery? Somewhere about £100,000.

7705. About what rate of interest did it return for 1888? I do not think it returned anything; we just barely paid our expenses.

7706. What were your working expenses for 1888? £9,840; for 1886, they were £21,567; for 1887, they were £17,607; and for 1888, they were £9,840.

7707. What labour do you employ in the refinery? Principally white labour. I think we had about twelve kanakas last year.

7708. What amount of wages was paid to Europeans during 1888? £4,262.

7709. *By Mr. King*: How many Europeans did you employ? Somewhere about 200.

7710. *By the Chairman*: What amount of wages did you pay to kanakas during 1888? £161. Those are absolutely correct figures.

7711. What labour is employed by the cane growers from whom you purchase the juice? Polynesians and a sprinkling of whites.

7712. Do the Polynesians preponderate over the white men in working in the cane? Yes; they do.

7713. Do you think from your own knowledge that cane can be profitably grown in the district by white labour alone? Not at the present rate of wages.

7714. Do you think that the present price of sugar would permit of European labour being employed? No; it would not.

7715. Then what do you think will be the effect on the sugar industry of the district, supposing the 11th section of "The Polynesian Act of 1885" is carried into operation—that is, the discontinuance of Polynesian labour after 1890? It would collapse here altogether.

7716. You are able to state that authoritatively from your own knowledge? Yes; it is already doing so.

7717. And

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- R. Cran, Junr. 7717. And what in your opinion has caused the depression in the sugar industry in Maryborough?
- 1 Mar., 1889. There are several causes. Of course, it is my opinion that one cause here has been the drought. We have had three droughts—but I think the labour question is the primary cause of the depression. It is not so much that there has been a scarcity of labour here, but the price of labour has gone up so much, and the institutions which have the planters in their hands have become funky, and have refused to advance any more money. That has done a great deal to prevent the industry going on. There are several estates wound up here for want of assistance. The land on the river would grow very good crops, for it is not at all played out. The first cause is, we have had bad prices for sugar. Then the cost of obtaining Polynesian labour has gone up to about twice the price it should be; and then we have had a succession of droughts. The frosts also have some influence in these Southern districts. They are not so bad if we have good weather to mature the cane. Up here the banks and monetary institutions are so afraid of labour being stopped that they have put the screw on all of us. We can't go in for new machinery, because we can't get the capital.
7718. What in your opinion—speaking from your own personal experience—can be done by legislation in order to improve the condition of the sugar industry? For my part I would like to see the Government take the recruiting of Polynesians into their own hands altogether. The planters are paying exorbitant prices for the passage of these boys. The shipowners are making a very good thing out of it now. They are getting £25 and £26 a head when they ought to be getting £13.
7719. What is the reason these high charges are being made now by the owners of these ships? Because you cannot get new ships to go into the trade on account of the introduction of labour into the colony stopping in such a short period. The prices would have to go down if the importation of the labour was to continue; at present the ship owners are getting exactly what they like for the boys. I think that the kanakas' term of service ought to be longer; instead of three years it should be five years; that would reduce the cost of passage nearly one-half. You pay £25, and that spread over three years represents nearly £10 a year, whereas if the term of service was five years it would only be about £6. It is quite a common thing for these recruiting ships to make £1,200 or £1,300 on a trip; and they make three trips in a year. They make about 150 per cent. on their value. Of course there are great risks in the trade.
7720. By Mr. King: Does not the frost here destroy a considerable quantity of the crop? Yes, it does; it is a great bugbear down here.
7721. And do you have frosts almost every year? Yes; but if we have fair seasons the frost is not such a great enemy, because the cane is matured by June, or ought to be.
7722. When the young crop is frost-bitten before there is any cane on it you lose it, do you not? No; cane will keep in dry weather when frosted for several months. I have known it keep till December.
7723. Does not the frost stop the growth of the cane? Of course; in the case of young cane, if it is frost-bitten it has to be cut down.
7724. By Mr. Cowley: In stating the amount of wages paid, does that include salaries for management, or only the work done by the men? It includes everything. We had a very short season this year, only four months. In former years the wages were very much more.
7725. Could you give us the amount of wages paid for the past two or three years? Yes. 1886, white men, £3,038; Polynesians, £240. 1887, white men, £6,700; Polynesians, £206. 1888, white men, £1,262; Polynesians, £161.
7726. Have you an interest in Yengarie, Millquin, and Linda? I have in Linda.
7727. Can you tell us the amount of juice you obtained per ton of cane at Linda? No; I cannot. I do not think it has ever been kept.
7728. Do you macerate? No; but we will this year.
7729. Up to the present have you ever taken macerated juice? No; never.
7730. Then those planters who had double crushing mills have never derived the full benefit from them? No.
7731. But you intend in future to allow them to macerate? Yes; to slightly macerate.
7732. By so doing do you think they will increase their returns? Yes.

JOHN WEBER examined:

- J. Weber. 7733. By the Chairman: You are a member of the firm of Weber Brothers? Yes.
- 1 Mar., 1889. 7734. How many acres have you altogether? Thirty acres under cultivation.
7735. But what is your total area? Fifty acres.
7736. Have you thirty under cultivation by cane? Yes.
7737. How much cane did you crush last season? For myself 5 tons, and for my brother 3 tons; 8 tons altogether.
7738. How was it that you got such a poor crop? Drought.
7739. What labour did you employ? Some free boys. Half the labour is done by my own hands, and some by my brother's. We sometimes keep four boys.
7740. Have you any land under cane this season? Yes; fifteen acres under cane now.
7741. What sort of crop have you got for this season? It is very poor, owing to the drought.
7742. In good seasons can you make a living out of growing cane? Oh, yes. I have done so before. I have got a mill, and do a very good thing out of it. I earn as much as I could if I was earning wages. At that time I did.
7743. Then in ordinary fair seasons would you continue to grow cane? Yes.
7744. Did you suffer much from frosts? Frosts never do us much harm except when there are droughts. The cane when there is a drought does not mature before the frost comes.
7745. Do you think you can continue to grow sugar cane with your own labour without employing any kanakas? Not altogether. If white labour was reliable it would be right enough.
7746. Supposing in place of your own family you had to employ white men and pay them the present rate of wages, would you make sugar cane growing pay then? I do not know. At the present rate of wages a white man would be just as cheap as a kanaka; only kanakas are reliable and you can depend on them.
7747. Then do I understand that you are paying as much to a kanaka now as you would to a white man? I have been paying them 8s. and 10s. a week, and for 10s. you can get a white man. That is exclusive of board and lodging.
7748. Have

7749. Have you ever tried immigrants? Yes; I had none last season, but the season before I had eight of them, and took off a crushing. I gave them 10s. and 12s. a week, but before I had them a fortnight they wanted 15s., and I was obliged to give it to them.
7749. How long did they remain with you? Some of them three months. I was crushing for another plantation.
7750. Were you satisfied with them? Oh, yes; I was satisfied with those men.
7751. If you could get the same class of men as you got then would you prefer them to kanakas? Yes; if I could keep them and they were reliable I would as soon have them as kanakas.
7752. You would not give the preference to the kanakas? No.
7753. *By Mr. King*: Before you put up your mill, what did you do with your cane? I got it crushed on half share.
7754. Did that pay you well? Yes; it paid me when we had good seasons.
7755. How much money have you got in the farm and machinery now—What is the value of your farm and machinery altogether? £800 for the machinery, and I was offered £1,000 for the farm.
7756. Has it paid you since you put up your machinery? It paid us until the price of sugar was lowered.
7757. Did you make sugar, or only crush the juice? Only crushed the juice.
7758. What price did you get for your juice? £14 a ton of juice—2,240 gallons.
7759. How much juice do you reckon you got per acre of cane? I have had as much as two tons, and I have had a season when I have not had a quarter of a ton.
7760. What would be a fair average for the past two or three years? Only about half a ton.
7761. Is your land exhausted—Do you think it is getting impoverished? No; my land is in perfect order now.
7762. Do you put any manure on the land? Oh, yes.
7763. What manure do you use—just farm-yard manure? Mostly manure from a dairy farm.
7764. Do you lose much by the frosts? When the cane is matured the frost will not harm it much; but it always comes too soon on account of the drought, and the cane is not matured enough to stand it.
7765. In this district do you not let plant cane grow about eighteen months before crushing? I have crushed it after eleven months.
7766. But is it not usual to allow it to grow for eighteen months? Yes; there is no depending on the first crop.
7767. Then you run the risk of two years frost with your plant cane? I suppose so.
7768. Is that not a considerable drawback? Yes. First cane is too soft, it will not stand frost, but the second crop will stand it better.
7769. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did the white men you employed work in the mill or do field work? I had them in the mill.
7770. Have you ever employed them in the field weeding, cutting, or trashing cane? I have employed them for dray work and driving horses, but I never employed them in ordinary work outside of horse driving.
7771. Has your mill double crushing appliances? No.
7772. What are the size of the rollers? Sixteen inches by two feet.

ERNEST GEORGE PORTER examined:

7773. *By the Chair*: How many years experience have you had in connection with the cultivation of E. G. Porter sugar? Seventeen years.
7774. In Queensland or elsewhere? In Queensland.
7775. Are you secretary of the Planters' Association here? Yes, honorary secretary.
7776. Have you been authorised by the association to appear before the Commission and give evidence on their behalf? No.
7777. Then you are only giving evidence on your own account? Yes.
7778. What is the name of your estate? I am renting Glenora.
7779. What is its total area? There are 130 acres under cane. The total area is about 240 acres.
7780. How many acres of cane were crushed last season? We crushed about sixty acres for thirty-five tons of sugar.
7781. Have you a mill? A crushing mill only.
7782. Do you sell the juice to Yengarie? Yes.
7783. What is the amount of capital invested in the plantation? I pay a rent of £3 an acre. That includes machinery and house.
7784. Can you tell us the capital invested? I cannot.
7785. *By Mr. King*: Have you any idea what it would be; it is important to get the amount of capital invested? I should say about £4,000.
7786. *By the Chairman*: Do you know of any interest that was returned on the capital for 1888 out of the plantation? I paid as rent, £350.
7787. What were your working expenses for the year? £1,700.
7788. What labour do you employ? I had an average of five white men and twenty blacks.
7789. What was the average wages paid to the kanaka boys? About £12 a year. Those were time-expired boys.
7790. What was the amount of wages paid to the five Europeans? 23s. a week and rations.
7791. What description of labour do you consider most suitable for field work on the plantations? Kanaka. I have employed Chinese, but the result was a big loss. I have employed white men entirely. I was the first to work a plantation here with white labour only.
7792. What has been your experience in the employment of white labour? They have been a great deal of trouble. They are always breaking their agreements. I remember some years ago a planter got out some thirty white men, and they nearly all absconded within six or seven months. It is the same with the Chinese; they abscond and go away to the goldfields.
7793. Is the land you cultivate free from stumps so that you can use the plough? Yes; but it is covered with nut grass, which is a great curse on this river.
7794. Do Europeans do the ploughing on your estate? Yes.
7795. How

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- E. G. Porter. 7795. How many acres do you cultivate for each black labourer employed? About a boy to every five acres.
- 1 Mar., 1880. 7796. And how many acres could one European work supposing he could use a plough and horses? He would have to do the trashing and weeding.
7797. No! Suppose he used the plough and horse-hoe in place of the kanaka? We plant the cane with the plough now, and it takes about six kanakas besides the five white men who do the ploughing. We require the kanakas to chip in between the cane and trash, besides the ploughing done by the white men. After planting, one man could work twenty acres with a horse-hoe.
7798. Do the blacks who work on your plantation suffer in health? No.
7799. Do the Europeans? No.
7800. Does the land show any signs of exhaustion? No.
7801. Do your crops suffer from frost? Yes. I lost nearly the whole of my crop last year from the drought and frost together. The frost came on after the drought.
7802. What is the value of the mill? From £1,700 to £1,800.
7803. Who was it manufactured by? Messrs. J. Walker and Co., Maryborough.
7804. I suppose you have thought over the present position of the sugar industry. Can you state to us what have been the causes, in your opinion, which have led to the present depression? First of all, labour is 100 per cent. dearer now than when I first of all started—fifteen or sixteen years ago. Sugar has gone down in value. There are many places on the river liable to flood. I had a flood the first year—I have had Glenora three years—and the last two years I had droughts. I have 130 acres of cane, and with the labour I employ I have lost about £1,000 a year. I have lost nearly £3,000 owing to floods and drought.
7805. Can you offer any suggestions by which, in your opinion, the sugar industry of Maryborough can be improved? The planters must have black labour, because there is no other labour you can get so suitable for the cultivation of sugar. If reliable labour were certain, planters would put in much more sugar. Some of those planters up the river who have shut up on account of the bad seasons, did so sooner than they otherwise would, because they thought the importation of kanakas was to be stopped.
7806. What, in your opinion, would be the effect on the district of Maryborough if ‘*The Polynesian Act of 1885*’ were put in force, and the importation of Polynesians were to cease at the end of 1890? We would all have to shut up; I would. There is some talk of the Isis people felling the scrub there, and going into sugar. One of the great drawbacks to persons in a small way is having only one refinery here. You are never certain, if you have a frost, of getting your crop off; it all depends on Yengarie.
7807. *By Mr. King*: Is your land on Tinana Creek? No, on the Mary River, close to the junction of Tinana Creek.
7808. Is it your opinion that it would be possible to irrigate the land on the Mary and Tinana Creek with water from Tinana Creek? Yes.
7809. Is there always a considerable stream running over the dam at the waterworks? Yes.
7810. Would it be very expensive to bring the water down to irrigate the land? No.
7811. If a scheme of irrigation was initiated would the farmers and planters be willing to pay the interest on the cost of the scheme? Yes.
7812. Would you yourself be willing to pay your share? Yes. My experience of irrigating cane has not been very much, and what I have seen of it has been disappointing to me. For instance, water does not affect the cane so much as it does lucerne or any other crops.
7813. Where did you see irrigation tried? I tried it at Antigua when I was manager.
7814. Did you obtain the water with the mill pump? Yes.
7815. How many gallons did you raise per hour? This was only about half-an-acre that we were experimenting with. I do not know what the pumps used to throw. I had a 3-inch pipe.
7816. How long did you play the water on the half-acre at a time? That I could hardly tell you. We used to soak it.
7817. Did you not calculate the quantity of water? No.
7818. Did you flood the land? We made a trench up each row and ran the water into it. I was afraid the salt would affect the roots.
7819. Was the experiment a success? No.
7820. Do you think that if fresh water were supplied in quantities sufficient for irrigation, you could afford to pay £1 an acre for it? Yes; I am sure we could.
7821. *By Mr. Cowley*: You say you had 130 acres under cane. What other crops did you grow? I have had lucerne. I have corn planted in between my cane.
7822. Do you use the rest of your land for grazing? Yes.
7823. Have you a dairy farm? No.
7824. Do you know of any other crops that can be grown here that will pay better than cane? No; I do not. Last year I grew as an experiment an alternate crop of blue peas, and they would have paid me very well if it had not been for the drought. I got a thrashing machine. I am going to try them again this year.
7825. When you say that your working expenses for the year were £1,700, do you include your rent? Yes.
7826. You say that labour has risen 100 per cent. Does that refer to white labour? No; to coloured labour. For instance, in 1873 we could get our boys here for from £9 to £10 passage, and now they cost £20. Then the wages paid to the boys was £6 a year, now it is nearly always £9 per boy.
7827. Does this arise from any great demand for labour, or any other cause? I think it is owing to the restrictions put on in bringing them here.
7828. Were you not managing other estates in the district? Yes; Yerra Yerra, from 1873 to 1877. Then I was managing Antigua for four years, from 1882 to 1886.
7829. Do the remarks you make in reference to white labour refer to those plantations? No; only the one I am on now.
7830. Did you ever employ white labour in field work on those plantations? No, not for hoeing. At Yerra Yerra our first 300 acres were put in by white labour. The work was done by contract.
7831. Was the cane cultivated by white labour? No; by kanakas and Chinese.

FREDERICK BRYANT examined:

F. Bryant.

1 Mar., 1889.

7832. *By the Chairman:* Are you mayor of Maryborough? Yes.
7833. Are you also in business in Maryborough? Yes.
7834. How long have you been a resident in Maryborough? Twenty-seven years.
7835. Are you acquainted with the sugar industry of the district? I am.
7836. From your own knowledge as a business man? Yes. I am not personally acquainted with it. I have never been engaged in it.
7837. Can you state what, in your opinion, are the causes of the present depression in the sugar industry of this district? I think the want of labour; the scarcity of reliable labour. I also think that one cause is that the soil wants renovating. That has a good deal to do with it.
7838. Do you think that the sugar lands have been overworked? I think so.
7839. Are there not several plantations closed in this district? A good many.
7840. Can you state of your own knowledge why they have closed? Only that they have not proved a financial success.
7841. Are you able to state from your own knowledge why they were not a financial success? No.
7842. Do you think that the failure of the sugar industry in Maryborough has had any effect on the commercial prosperity of the district? A very great deal.
7843. Are you able to speak of that from your own personal knowledge? Yes.
7844. Then if restored it would have a very considerable influence on the future prosperity of Maryborough? A great deal.
7845. Could you offer us any suggestions by which in your opinion the sugar industry could be improved? No; I could not.
7846. Do you think that if the Government were to establish irrigation works in the district that any of the cane growers would avail themselves of it for irrigating their land? I could hardly say; I am not sufficiently conversant with agriculture. I can only speak of the effect the stamping out of sugar would have on Maryborough commercially.
7847. Has the failure of the sugar industry affected all branches of trade in Maryborough? Yes; very much. The demand for horses and stock and everything has diminished already very considerably.
7848. *By Mr. King:* Do you speak of your own knowledge when you say that frost is a serious enemy to cane growing in this district? Yes; frost has interfered with it.
7849. Is that one of the probable reasons why the crops have given such poor returns lately? I do not know why, but I know that frost has had a great deal to do with the failure of the crops.
7850. If the sugar industry were to die out of this district, would it affect the business of the town materially? I think that to a very large extent it has done so already.
7851. How has the falling off in the cultivation of sugar affected the town at the present time? It is absolutely impossible to realise or sell any of the large plantations or any of the land. Property has become valueless.
7852. Has it diminished the amount of business done in the town? Yes; very much. My own business has suffered a good deal from it.
7853. Has it in any way affected the value of property in the town? Yes; I think that is one of the reasons why property is so cheap as it is now, not only property in town but farms and plantations on the river banks.
7854. *By Mr. Cowley:* Are you practically connected with the owners of sugar plantations at all? No; I am not.
7855. Do you know if they own other land to any extent? I do not know. I believe they do not.
7856. Has any other crop supplanted sugar on the abandoned plantations? No.
7857. Then all the capital invested in these plantations, in clearing and improving, is lost? Yes.
7858. And the result is that there is much less labour employed in the district now than previously? Yes, very much less.
7859. Were these plantations that are now stopped, or some of them, at one time moderately successful? Yes; Magnolia, Marion, and Kelly's.
7860. Do you remember the yield of sugar at Magnolia, the year it was published in the *Chronicle*, when Cummings was manager? I do not think Cummings ever had the charge of Magnolia. I know that four tons of sugar per acre were taken out of the land by the sugar company next to Magnolia.
7861. *By Mr. King:* Is the Sugar Company's plantations out of cultivation now? Nearly; but not quite.
7862. *By Mr. Cowley:* Are you in a position to give us the amount of capital invested in those plantations that are now closed? No; I am not.
7863. Could you form any idea of the number of white men permanently employed on these sugar plantations previous to their closing? No; I could not. I dare say I could get it.
7864. *By the Chairman:* If you would, you would oblige us very much.

ROBERT EVANS examined:

R. Evans.

1 Mar., 1889.

7865. *By the Chairman:* What are you? I am an auctioneer and a commission agent. It is from my past experience that I want to speak of the working of plantations, as I was on a very large estate at home.
7866. Have you been engaged in the sugar industry in Queensland? No, not long; but I worked in the sugar cane when I first came here, and saw something of the management and so forth.
7867. *By Mr. King:* Do you want to make a statement to put before the Commission? Yes. I was engaged for some time on a plantation in this district, and happened to be on several of the plantations when they were working cutting cane and doing other kinds of work during the season. I was just in the heart of the season. On some of the plantations I remember that I thought that drainage would be necessary, that to drain the fields with pipes would be necessary. I also thought that without some artificial manure, such as bone dust or bones, being supplied the soil on many of the plantations would become exhausted in course of time; or rather that, for want of certain component parts, the soil would eventually become exhausted, unless it was artificially subsidised with like ingredients. I also thought that to successfully carry on cane growing, the cane grounds should occasionally have another crop put into them so as to help nature;

R. Evans.
1 Mar., 1889.

nature; that is after the cane roots have been ploughed up. I noticed particularly that the constant cutting down of cane, or the uprooting of cane and replanting cane roots again on the same land must in course of time bring about what I will call a very stagnant result in cane growing. As regards the labour being engaged on the cane field, I noticed that there would not have been so much objection on the part of white labourers to work in the cane, cutting, trashing, &c., if they had been allowed to work early in the morning and late in the evening, and allowed to go off more in the middle of the day when the great heat was on. I found that out from actual conversation between my fellow-workers and myself. What I would suggest in a practical way would be to send samples of the soil, of each plantation, or perhaps from two or three different places on the same plantation, to some competent public analyst and have them analysed, and the question submitted to the analyst, "What will the soil grow," or "what would it be best suited to?" or "would that soil grow certain things?"

7868. How long were you on a sugar plantation here? I was on one for about nine months in the very thick of all the season and of all the work, and I was travelling about from one farm or plantation to another during all the time when my employers were cutting cane, and buying cane and having it cut on the different plantations.

7869. How many years ago was that? About eighteen years.

7870. Were you a new chum at that time? Yes. But I may say that I observed more from extensive experience. I had the privilege while at home of frequently going on one of the largest estates in England, which was thoroughly drained with pipes, and saw the application of manure tested.

7871. Were you ever, when in England, employed in agricultural pursuits? We had a farm under our own landlord, but it was pastoral land. But my father was manager for the proprietor, and he had cultivated land. I went on it for a time. I could go over it whenever I liked. I have also had experience in the management of gardens. Two of my brothers are professional gardeners, so I had considerable experience in the management and cultivation of soil and gardens.

7872. By Mr. Cowley: What plantation were you employed on? Etonvale.

7873. Who owned it? Mr. Eton, I think.

7874. Was he managing it himself? Yes; under a manager.

7875. Are you not aware that a great deal of draining has been done at Etonvale? I am not aware of it.

7876. Then you know nothing about it during the last eighteen years? If any draining has taken place it was during the period when Mr. Canny was there.

7877. What did you do on the plantation? I did all kinds of work—trashing, cutting, and planting cane.

7878. Are you not aware that a great deal of money has been spent by the planters in this district in manuring? I know that some of them were going to use megass.

7879. Are you a practical agriculturist? I could not say that I am actually practical. I do not say that I could go and do everything like a ploughman, but I know what ought to be done.

7880. What crop would you suggest to take the place of sugar cane? I believe that it would be well if experiments were tried to produce beet sugar in some parts of the colony.

7881. But you say that one of the effects of continually cropping cane is that the soil becomes exhausted. What crop would you suggest as an alternative? I would suggest beet because it would produce sugar. It would have a beneficial effect in establishing a system of rotation of crops.

7882. What would you do with the beet? You can convert it into sugar.

7883. Then it is evident that you are not acquainted with the art of manufacturing sugar? No, I was not engaged in its manufacture.

7884. Are you not aware that the machinery for producing sugar from beet is different from that used for manufacturing it from cane? Yes; but I should think that the machinery for beet would be much less expensive than for cane.

7885. Would you suggest that the planters have two plants, one for beet and one for sugar? Yes.

7886. Are you not aware that several of the owners of land have had their soil analysed? Yes, but I doubt whether the soil was taken from more than one place on the same plantation.

7887. Then you are really working on surmise, you have had no actual experience as to what the planters have done in the way of analysing their soil? I believe they have done comparatively little in the way of manuring. They may have analysed their soils.

FRIDAY, 1 MARCH, 1889.

[EVENING SITTING.]

MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT.

(At Pialba.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

ANTHONY ANDERSON examined:

A. Anderson. 7888. By the Chairman: Are you a farmer living in this district? Yes.

7889. What is the extent of your selection? 100 acres.

7890. How many acres have you under cultivation? Seventy acres. Well, they are not all under cultivation; thirty acres are under cultivation; the seventy acres have been under cultivation.

7891. What were you growing when you had your seventy acres under cultivation? Partly corn and oats; a little of each.

7892. Have you grown any sugar cane? Yes; eleven acres.

7893. How long ago was that? It was about seven years ago. At the time the Dulong mill was working. I cannot exactly say, but it was about seven years.

7894. By

7894. *By Mr. King*: What cane have you in now? Only about an acre for the cows.
7895. What made you diminish the quantity of cane that you grow? I was growing it for sale to the mill at Dulong.
7896. *By the Chairman*: How is it that seven years ago you were growing eleven acres of cane, and that now you are only growing one? The owners of the mill could not make it pay, and so would not take my cane.
7897. *By Mr. King*: Is there any mill near you now? No; no mill here at all; they took it to Maryborough.
7898. Did you grow cane with white or black labour? White labour.
7899. What did you get for it? I was promised 16s. a ton and I got 8s. a ton.
7900. Did it pay you at 8s. a ton? Yes; for I got the 8s. a ton, and then in addition I got 10s. in the £ of the balance of 8s. per ton promised—that made an actual total of 12s. a ton.
7901. When did the Dulong mill stop work? They were only here two years.
7902. Are you not near enough to the Yenogera mill? The same people who had the Dulong mill had the Yenogera mill.
7903. But that mill has only just stopped work? It is a long time since it stopped work.
7904. How many farmers are there in this locality? Between seventy and eighty farmers.
7905. Are they all living close together? In the part of the district I came from there are thirty in a lump.
7906. Are they all near enough together to send their cane to the same mill? Yes.
7907. Do you know what was the reason that Dulong mill was closed? The men were too poor to start with.
7908. But was not the company that was formed afterwards rich enough to carry it on? Yes; but they were not able to carry on.
7909. What quantity of cane do you suppose that the thirty farmers round you could grow to send to a mill if there was one? I could manage to plant twenty-five acres, some could put in twelve acres, and others ten acres.
7910. Could they altogether make up from 300 to 400 acres? Yes; we counted it up one day and calculated we could produce 600 acres of cane in my locality, and we could plant more if the mill was handy.
7911. Do you know what was the price of sugar at the time the Dulong mill was at work? I can't exactly say. The sugar that we give 14s. a bag for now was 10s. a bag then. We got £18 a ton for the best that was grown.
7912. Did they make good sugar? A very fair sugar. It was not refined sugar.
7913. Have the farmers about here talked over this business of the sugar industry? No.
7914. Have you any suggestions to make to the Commission whereby the farmers could be benefited? No; only that the farmers would grow sugar cane if any mill would guarantee to take it. That is the only thing.
7915. When you grew your cane, did you grow it with black labour? Yes.
7916. What weight of cane did you get per acre? About three tons per acre of sugar, but I was paid per ton of cane. I got between thirty-six and forty tons of cane off the acre.
7917. How many years did you grow it? Only for two years. Then I allowed the cows to come in and eat it up.
7918. Are you not near enough to Boyle Martin's mill? No, it is too far; but he will not take cane from farmers.
7919. *By the Chairman*: Would the farmers living round you undertake to grow cane solely by white labour, if the Government erected a central mill here? Yes; we would.
7920. Did Mr. Hodgkinson pay you a visit? No, he did not come down here.
7921. If he had come down here and made a proposition of that kind, would you have accepted it? My word, we would.
7922. Are you prepared to accept such a proposition if made now? Yes.
7923. And be prepared to enter into all the arrangements for a central mill on that footing? Yes; it is the only thing that we want. If we don't get something of the sort we might just as well leave the country altogether; we can't make a living.

ANDRES PETER STEVENSON examined:

7924. *By the Chairman*: Are you a farmer living in this district? Yes.
7925. What is the extent of your holding? I have 118 acres.
7926. How many acres have you under cultivation? Last year I had 700 acres in my possession. I had very nearly forty acres under cane. I sold some of my cane, but at a very low price, and I had to pay money to get it away from the field. I lost everything, but out of the 700 acres I managed to purchase back 118 acres. I got it back on lease. I have to pay it back in five years; it is £500 in all.
7927. Do you mean to say that you had to go into the insolvency court? No, not at all.
7928. *By Mr. King*: Was the land sold to pay your debts? I could not pay the interest?
7929. *By Mr. Cowley*: Was it mortgaged? Yes. The mortgagee took possession.
7930. And now the mortgagee has given you back a portion of it, with five years to pay it in? Yes.
7931. *By the Chairman*: What interest were you paying to the mortgagee? Nine per cent. That is what I am paying now.
7932. How many acres of sugar cane are you growing now? I destroyed the whole lot.
7933. *By Mr. Cowley*: What price did you get for your cane? Boyle Martin crushed part of it for me, and he did it on the half-and-half principle; but sometimes I had to pay him. I had five kanakas myself, and the others I got from Boyle Martin's, and had to pay him for them. I had to pay all the expenses of cutting the cane and taking it down to the mill, and I only got half the profit out of it. That is the reason I lost so much, because I did not get as much for the cane as would pay my expenses.
7934. How many acres did he crush altogether for you? That was not last year, but the year before. I think he crushed something like twenty acres. If we had had good seasons it might have paid.
7935. How much sugar did you get for your share—how many tons? I forget that. I have it in a book at home. I think it was something like seven tons. I am not quite sure.

A. P.
Stevenson.

1 Mar., 1889.

7936. *By*

- A. P. Stevenson.
1 Mar., 1889.
7936. *By the Chairman*: What are you growing now? I have been planting corn, but could not grow it at the price.
7937. If a mill were erected near you would you grow sugar cane again? Yes. If a mill were erected here by Mr. Cran, the same as he proposes in the Isis, not only I but very nearly all the settlers would grow cane. It is the only thing that will grow here.
7938. But if the Government were to erect a central mill here, would you undertake to grow cane by white labour? Yes; I would.
7939. *By Mr. Cowley*: And how much money would you want per ton to grow it with white labour? I could sell the cane very well and cart it half-a-mile to Martin's for 8s. a ton. I would cart it two miles for 8s. a ton. That is not only my own opinion, but many others would grow it at the same price. I was thinking of asking the Government to buy Martin's mill. I do not think they would do it, but it would be no harm to ask them to do so.
7940. How many selectors are living near you? Round my place for 2½ miles there are about thirty.
7941. And would the whole of the thirty grow cane? I could not say the whole, but the most part would if they only got a little bit of a guarantee.
7942. *By Mr. King*: How many acres of cane do you think the farmers who are around you would be prepared to grow altogether? I could not say until we had a meeting.
7943. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are you employing any kanakas now? Not now.
7944. Did you when you were growing cane? Yes.
7945. How many did you employ? I had five.
7946. How much did you pay them? Some of them 10s. and some of them 15s. a week. I got them under agreement for six months.
7947. What work did you do with those boys when you had them? They did the heavy field work. They were engaged planting and cutting cane, and helping with the bananas.
7948. And do you think that you could grow cane, chip, plant, weed, and trash it, and do all the work with white labour? Yes; I can grow it with white labour and deliver it at a mill two miles away for 8s. a ton.
7949. What labour would you get to do the work? I would get white men. I would do it myself, and my own son and some other white men would help me.
7950. What wages would you pay these men? About 12s. a week and rations—about 19s. altogether.
7951. Is that the most you could afford to give them? I think so. A man who gets 12s. a week and rations, I think does very well, and farmers could not pay any more, and would sooner do without him.
7952. Does the cane here suffer much from frost? Not my cane. We had cane all the season round, and my cane had not the slightest touch of frost. Martin's had a little frost, but not much.
7953. Do you know what was the weight per acre of the cane grown? Martin had something like three tons of sugar to each acre.
7954. Have you never weighed your cane? My cane went about forty tons to the acre. That was two year old cane.
7955. Have the farmers ever talked over their position.—Do they meet together and talk it over? Yes; several of them. Some of them would grow tobacco if there was a tobacco factory in Maryborough. Tobacco grows here like a weed. For my part I have five acres of tobacco, and would want to put down tobacco.
7956. Do you think that tobacco would pay better than sugar? I think it would. If we could get 6d. a lb. it would pay very well.
7957. What price would you expect to get for leaf tobacco? Taking it all through, about 6d. a lb.
7958. Have any of you had any experience in growing tobacco and saving it? I have had a little bit.
7959. Do you understand how to save the leaf? Yes.

JENS CHRISTIAN DAMM examined:

- J. C. Damm.
1 Mar., 1889.
7960. *By the Chairman*: What are you? I am farming in this district.
7961. How long have you been here? Nineteen years.
7962. Have you lived in this district all those years? No.
7963. How long have you been here? About ten years.
7964. How many acres have you altogether? One hundred.
7965. How many have you cultivated? I have very few under cultivation. I have had ten acres under cultivation.
7966. What were you growing when you had ten acres under cultivation. The principal crop was sugar—eight acres of cane.
7967. And to whom did you sell your cane? The first year I sold it to Stutz' mill.
7968. What did you get for it? On an average I had about 7s. a ton.
7969. Did it pay you at that price? No.
7970. Did you continue growing sugar cane? No; I did not plant any more.
7971. And have you not grown any since? No; for they dissolved partnership and had to close the mill for want of capital. I sold three acres to a man named L'ope, who took the mill, for £15. That paid me right enough. It paid me better than the first year.
7972. Could sugar cane be grown profitably if you had a mill near enough? Yes; I do think that I would plant cane again if the Government put up a good mill which we could depend on to sell our cane to.
7973. Would you undertake to grow sugar cane by white labour entirely if the Government were to erect a mill? Yes. I have never had black labour.
7974. At what price would you sell your cane to a Government mill if it was put up here? That all depends on the distance I would be from it. If within a mile I could sell cane at 8s. a ton, and deliver it at the mill.
7975. Have you and your neighbours talked over this subject of growing sugar cane amongst yourselves? No. We knew nothing about it (the visit of the Commission) until this afternoon. I am not working on the farm.

7976. I mean

J. C. Damm.

7976. I mean previously? Oh, yes.

7977. What conclusion did you come to? Just what I have now stated—that if a central mill were erected here we would grow cane for it.

7978. How many farmers live round you in your locality? There are five near me who have grown sugar.

7979. *By Mr. King*: How long has Stutz's mill been closed? I think it has been closed very nearly three years. I would not be quite certain.

7980. Has it been removed? No; it is still standing there.

7981. What was the reason that the mill failed? All the mills that were down here were not fitted for the manufacture of sugar at the price sugar was at that time. If you like I will tell you the way I was treated with the first crop of sugar. The proprietor of the mill said he would take my first crop and crush it, and we agreed that I should have 13s. a ton for 10 per cent. density. I quite agreed to that. I knew that would pay me. He tested it with the saccarometer, but before doing so he used to mix the juice with rubbish, and so the saccarometer would not rise, and only showed 5 per cent. density. If he had allowed it to settle it would soon have shown more. I have seen it when settled show 5, 7, 8, and even 11 per cent. density. So he humbugged me altogether, and that is why I only averaged 7s. a ton.

7982. How many acres of cane could be grown in your neighbourhood, supposing there was a mill; taking it all together, you growing some and your neighbours growing some? That would be a very hard question to answer now; we would want to calculate up first. Of course, if all the farmers planted the same quantity, all you would require to do to ascertain the acreage would be to count the farmers. I could now, if I started, put in ten acres of cane; but there are others who would not be able to do it.

7983. Then altogether you would not be able to put more than 100 acres under cane in your neighbourhood? No; I mean on this side of the hill.

7984. Have you tried any other crop besides sugar cane? Maize.

7985. Did it pay? No; it does not for one reason, that when there is a good crop there is no market for it. One year I took off 57 bushels to the acre, and that would have paid me; but it was the only crop I took off my ground that did pay me. I got 4s. and 5s. a bushel for it.

7986. *By Mr. Cowley*: Are you married? Yes; and have a family.

7987. When you said that you could grow cane for the mill at 8s. a ton, would you be assisted by your own family in growing it? No.

7988. How do you intend to grow it? I intended to grow ten acres with my own family, but I intended to employ labour to plant it and cut it, but I would keep it clean with my own family.

7989. What would you pay the labourers you would employ? What I paid them before was 25s. a week and rations.

7990. And do you think that you could pay those wages and grow cane for 8s. per ton? Yes.

7991. *By Mr. King*: Is there any other crop that you know of that could pay as well as cane, that could be grown in this district? I do not think so. Cane seems to grow fine in this district. I have had rappoe cane two years old standing 21 feet and 22 feet high. I have some of this Caledonian ribbon cane, it does well. I took off cane that was 17 feet and over 18 feet.

7992. Have you tried the cultivation of the vine? I have, but they have not borne any crop yet.

7993. Do oranges grow well in this district? Yes. I have a few orange trees and they flourish very nicely.

7994. Have you a good market for fruit? Well, yes; in the summer time we can sell it very well round about here.

7995. Is there not always a market in Maryborough? Yes; I think I could sell fruit in Maryborough at any time. But a man could not make a living out of that alone, unless he went into it extensively. It also requires knowledge for fruit growing, whereas cane is such a simple thing to grow.

SATURDAY, 2 MARCH, 1889.

MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT.

(At Pialba.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

GEORGE ANDROSE WHITE examined:

7996. *By the Chairman*: You are a fruit grower in the Maryborough District? Yes.

7997. What area of land do you cultivate? I think about forty acres.

7998. What fruit do you principally produce? Bananas, pineapples, grapes, and a little of everything—*oranges*.

7999. Do you export your fruit to other colonies? Yes.

8000. Do you send it to Brisbane? Well, I send a small quantity to Brisbane. I send more to the other colonies—to Sydney and Melbourne.

8001. What has been your experience with regard to the loss of fruit in transit? During the season of 1887-8, the season before last, and the season just finished, I lost by ullage over 100 dozen, out of 20,000 that I sent. That is over 50 per cent. Some of them were carried as deck cargo, and some between decks; there was loss both ways.

8002. Did you make any application to the company for redress? I spoke to the agents here several times, and they said that they had employed a detective at various times, but the thief could not be discovered.

G. A. White.

2 Mar., 1889.

8003. What

G. A. White. 8003. What company? Both companies. I had loss by both companies.

8004. *By Mr. King*: Are you certain that the fruit was put on board all right? Yes; I saw it put on board myself.

2 Mar., 1889. 8005. None of it would be pilfered before it went on board? Not the slightest.

8006. Have you had any losses with other fruits? With grapes sent to Rockhampton. I have complained of one shipment of six cases of grapes because 10 lbs. were taken out of each case.

8007. What company were these carried by? By Messrs. Howard Smith and Co. They were shipped in the steamer "Balmain."

8008. *By the Chairman*: As deck cargo? I should think it would be as deck cargo; but they were packed securely in good cases, and no one, excepting those who actually knew that I shipped grapes, would know what was inside; but the thieves took the lids off. I also lost five cases of fruit out of two shipments of fifty cases.

8009. *By Mr. King*: Have you to accept bills of lading exonerating the company from all responsibility? I accept the bills of lading that are prepared by the agents.

8010. Why do you take bills of lading on these terms? Because if I did not I might keep the fruit. I would have to keep the fruit, or accept the company's own terms.

8011. Then you have no choice? No choice.

8012. *By Mr. Couley*: What was the weight of those cases of grapes on which you lost the 10 lbs.? 60 lbs. each.

8013. You lost 10 lbs. out of every 60 lbs.? Yes.

8014. Was the loss from actual ullage or from decay? From ullage, because they were only twenty-four hours on the boat at the most, and the man to whom I sold them, the consignee at Rockhampton made no complaint of any decay during the season.

8015. How do you account for them being able to open the cases on such a short trip? I do not know.

8016. Was the fruit sold and delivered in Maryborough, or do you run the risk of loss? I delivered it free on board.

8017. Then it was a loss to the consignee? Yes.

8018. In shipping fruit to the southern colonies, have you had any great loss from decay? None. The only fruit sent south was pineapples, and I had no complaints of any decay.

8019. Then they carry well except for the pilfering? Yes; for anything I know to the contrary.

8020. Have you never been able in any one instance to obtain compensation from the company for this loss? No.

8021. Do you find that flying foxes are bad to the fruit here? Very. And a great many of our native birds destroy the fruit, and I think that the Native Birds Protection Act includes a number of birds it ought not to, and if the law was carried out to the strict letter, scarcely any fruit growers would be able to protect themselves.

8022. *By Mr. King*: What birds do you find obnoxious? There is one that has been eating the bananas on the river for two or three years. We call it the red-bill; some call it the water-hen. There is the bald-headed coote; it is very destructive to young corn, but it also attacks the bananas when about three-parts grown.

8023. These birds are not protected under the Native Birds Protection Act? I am not sure, but I think they are, according to my reading. Then the magpies and such birds are very troublesome.

8024. Do the flying foxes eat the pineapples? No. I have done my best to have them destroyed, and I have given £5 to one man for the greatest number of scalps that could be brought in.

8025. Do you think that the flying foxes should be included in the Obnoxious Animals Act? Yes; certainly.

(At Maryborough.)

THOMAS BOLES SMITH examined.

T. B. Smith. 8026. *By the Chairman*: Are you Polynesian Inspector for Maryborough? Yes.

8027. How long have you been in that capacity? Since May, 1882.

2 Mar., 1889. 8328. What number of Polynesians are now in the Maryborough district? Trusting to memory, I might say about 500.

8029. Have you a register of all of them? Oh, yes.

8030. How many of these are indentured boys now in service under a three years' engagement? Trusting to memory, I would say about 400. I am just speaking from memory; that is as near as I can go.

8031. How many time-expired boys are there? About forty with certificates.

8032. Then where are the balance to make up the 500? A great many of them are employed on farms illegally; and a lot of them are walking about unemployed.

8033. Have you a register of all the boys whether they are employed legally or illegally? Not of those who are employed illegally.

8034. Then these boys are not under your control? No, not if they are illegally employed, and I do not know where they are employed.

8035. Have some of the Polynesians rented shops and carried on business in Maryborough? I have heard so; two of them.

8036. Do you visit the plantations where those boys are now engaged? Yes.

8037. Are any of them on plantations that have been closed? No; none that I am aware of.

8038. Could you furnish us with a return showing the number of kanakas in the district and the places where they are working? Yes; certainly. [See Appendix.]

8039. Have you had any complaints from these boys in regard to their treatment in any way? Sometimes trivial little complaints have come in and I have investigated them, and in the majority of cases found that they were not quite correct.

8040. Have you had complaints of their being supplied with liquor? Yes; many a time.

8041. Have you prosecuted those parties for breach of the Act in that respect? No; but the police have on several occasions.

8042. Do the kanakas come in any numbers into town on Saturday nights? No, not now; very few.

8043. Have you heard of their creating any disturbance in Maryborough on Saturday nights? Not lately; they very seldom create any disturbance.

8044. Only when under the influence of liquor? That is all; and even then only when interfered with by larrikins and white men.

8045. Have

8045. Have you heard of the Polynesians visiting the haunts of the Chinese? Yes.
8046. And being taken into Chinese boarding-houses? Yes. That is quite a common occurrence.
8047. Have you read the description in the *Maryborough Chronicle* of some of those Chinese haunts? Yes. 2 Mar., 1889.
8048. Are there any grounds for these complaints? I think there are.
8049. Has the attention of the police been called to them? I believe so.
8050. Do you consider it your duty, as inspector, to call the attention of the head of the department in Brisbane to these facts? I have never done so.
8051. Do you not think that you should? I never thought it was necessary. I thought it was quite sufficient to have them under the surveillance of the police. I do not see what advice he could give me in the matter.
8052. Are you Polynesian protector as well as inspector? I believe so.
8053. Do you not think that such duties as that would come under your jurisdiction as Polynesian protector to protect the islanders against those haunts of demoralisation that are kept by Chinamen? I have many a time spoke myself to the islanders about it, and I have even gone into those Chinese shops. I have often tried to get the kanakas away from there.
8054. Are you present when they are paid their wages? Yes.
8055. Do many of them put money in the savings bank? Not many.
8056. Are you able to state the amount to the credit of the Polynesians in your district in the savings bank? Not at present; I could tell you from the books.
8057. Are the forty time-expired boys within your jurisdiction? Well, I might say that they are not. They are free to do as they like.
8058. Then there are really 100 boys outside of your control? Yes.
8059. Have you heard of any of them coming into active competition with white men in obtaining employment? No; never.
8060. *By Mr. King*: How are the Polynesians treated by their employers? Very well, so far as I am aware. The complaints they bring in are very few.
8061. Are they well looked after when sick? Very well.
8062. Is there any excessive mortality or sickness amongst them now? No; it is very small now in comparison to what it was a few years ago. There is very little sickness at the present time.
8063. Is there no demand for Polynesians at present in the Mary district, or what is the reason that the number has fallen so very low? I could not give you the reason.
8064. Have you had any applications for licenses to recruit from this district? Yes; there are licensed vessels away at present.
8065. Do you think that the demand for Polynesians is gradually dying out in the Maryborough district? Yes; several of the plantations have been shut up here.
8066. *By Mr. Cooley*: I suppose all the Polynesians are actually under your protection? Yes.
8067. If they were to apply to you for anything, whether they were engaged or not, you would attend to them? Yes.
8068. Can you give any reason why they are not depositing money in the savings bank? Only one reason: some two or three years ago some islanders died, and the relatives tried to get money that did not belong to them out of the savings bank. There was a lot of trouble and delay about it, and they expressed themselves very much dissatisfied with this, and several of them openly stated that they would prevent their mates from depositing money again in the savings bank. They always like to be able to lay their hands on a pound if they require it.
8069. Have you a dépôt here for islanders? No; not for islanders. There was a dépôt for islanders, but it is closed. There is no dépôt unless they occupy the European portion of it.
8070. Then when the boys are waiting to be returned to their native islands there is no dépôt for them to live in in the meantime? No; unless they remain in the place where they have been in the habit of residing. They seem to have an objection to living in the European dépôt. I have tried several times to get them into it, but they will not go.
8071. Is the European portion of the dépôt open for them if they wish to use it? Yes.
8072. Then they prefer to take care of themselves? Yes; and they go on to the plantations, or live anywhere outside of the dépôt.
8073. Is their last employer always willing to keep them? Yes.
8074. Is there any reason for their going into these Chinese boarding houses? None whatever.
8075. It is simply a matter of preference? Yes.
8076. *By Mr. King*: You are also immigration agent? Yes.
8077. What are the wages that newly-arrived immigrants get in this district? At the present time married couples get from £35 to £45 a year; single men get £30 a year on an average, scarcely that—that is perhaps the outside price; single girls get from 10s to 12s a week.
8078. Have the wages of white single men increased or decreased during last year—since a number of the plantations became closed? For the past twelve months they have decreased; but that is due more to the drought than to any other cause.
8079. Has the demand for immigrants declined or advanced? It has diminished very considerably.

ERNEST GEORGE PORTER recalled.

8080. *By the Chairman*: As secretary of the Planters' Association, can you supply us with a return showing the number of plantations in the Maryborough district; the capital invested therein; the annual working expenditure of each; the number of men employed—black and white; specifying in the return which are the plantations that are now closed? I will forward it to you in the course of a day or two.

[See Appendix.]

ROBERT HART examined:

8081. *By the Chairman*: You are a member of the firm of Messrs. Wilson and Hart? Yes.
8082. *By Mr. King*: You have a sawmill in Maryborough? Yes.
8083. Where used you to dispose of your timber? In all the Northern ports of Queensland—from Maryborough to Northampton.

8084. Has

T. B. Smith.

2 Mar., 1889.

H. G. Porter.

2 Mar., 1889.

R. Hart.

2 Mar., 1889.

- R. Hart. 8084. Has there been any alteration in the trade of late years? Yes, a great alteration in trade since 1883.
- 2 Mar., 1889. 8085. What direction has the alteration taken? In falling off.
8086. Can you give us any idea as to what extent the trade has fallen off? Yes, from 1883 to 1886 25 per cent. There is a general falling off in our trade here as well, but I can give you the falling off in, say, Mackay.
8087. Well, take Mackay for instance? In Mackay in 1883, there was £19,600 worth of timber sold by us, in 1884 £15,000 worth, in 1887 £9,000 worth, and in 1888 £5,700 worth.
8088. To what do you attribute this falling off? In Mackay, to the sugar industry being depressed.
8089. Might it not be due to the fact of other saw-mill owners competing against you? No, not in Mackay.
8090. How is your local trade in Maryborough affected? The falling off in our trade here from 1882 to 1886 has been 25 per cent.
8091. To what do you attribute the diminution of your local trade? To general depression in sugar all over the north.
8092. There is then a general depression in trade caused by the depression in the sugar industry? Yes.
8093. Do you wish to make any suggestion to the Commission? No, I do not.

JOSEPH WHITING examined :

- J. Whiting. 8094. *By the Chairman* : What are you? A journalist.
- 2 Mar., 1889. 8095. Residing in Maryborough? Residing in Maryborough.
8096. Do you know of many time-expired boys being in Maryborough at present? Yes; a great many. I could not tell you how many—perhaps 100. I could not say exactly.
8097. Do you know if any of them are in business in town? Yes; there are some.
8098. Engaged in trade? There are two renting shops. To my knowledge there are two. There may be more.
8099. Do you know if any of these time-expired boys are coming into competition with the white labourers of Maryborough? Yes.
8100. Do you know the men, and the mode in which they are competing? Yes; as gardeners and coachmen.
8101. Do you know of your own knowledge if Chinamen who keep boarding houses here are inducing kanakas into their haunts and dens in this town? Yes; I have myself seen six kanakas in a Chinese den or brothel.
8102. Were those in Chinese boarding houses? No; merely opium-smoking places.
8103. Are these places licensed under the provisions of the Health Act? No; they are not licensed.
8104. Do you know if the attention of the Polynesian protector has been called to this or not? No.
8105. Do you know if anything has been done by the police to put a stop to it? The police have done nothing to put a stop to it.
8106. Is there any other matter that you wish to refer to? I know of three places kept by Chinese, in addition to those I have mentioned, in which there are white women, and kanakas frequently visiting these places.
8107. *By Mr. Conley* : How do you arrive at the number of time-expired boys who are loafing about town? I did not say loafing. I intended to say that the men were at work.
8108. Are there 100 time-expired boys at work? Yes, about that number.
8109. They are under agreement, I suppose? So far as my knowledge goes they are employed on wages; they may be under an agreement.
8110. Do you know if they are under agreement or not? I do not.
8111. I suppose you are aware of the provisions of the Act by which anyone employing islanders without an agreement can be punished? Yes, I am aware of it.
8112. Do you know of your own knowledge whether these men are under agreement or not? I have no knowledge.
8113. You say there are two kanakas renting shops? Yes.
8114. Are they renting them from a white man? Yes.
8115. How long have these kanakas been in the country? I cannot say.
8116. Can you say whether they are exempt from the Polynesian Act, and are what are known as ticket boys? No, I can not.
8117. How many kanakas are there engaged as gardeners and coachmen? How many are there whom you actually know are gardeners, or driving coaches or buggies? I know of twelve.
8118. Is this done publicly or disguised? No; they drive through town, and I have seen them working in gardens.
8119. Are these boys exempt or not? I do not know.
8120. And you can't say how long they have been in the country? No.
8121. You say you have seen six kanakas at one time in a Chinese brothel? Yes.
8122. How did you know that it was a Chinese brothel? Because on a subsequent evening a woman was taken out of it. She is now in Toowoomba gaol.
8123. A white woman? A white woman.
8124. Are all these women who are kept by Chinamen white women, or are they Chinese women? White women.
8125. And are you very familiar with those places? Well, yes I am, because, you see, my business takes me there as a journalist.
8126. Is it not a very common thing to see white men there? No; I never saw a white man there.
8127. Are you quite sure of that? Yes; they are Chinese brothels.
8128. From your knowledge of the district are the kanakas more addicted to this sort of thing than the same number of white men would be, or are they less addicted to it? Probably the immorality of the kanakas is more open.
8129. Have you ever reported these and other matters that came under your notice as a journalist to the police? Yes; I have told them what I saw.

8130. Have

J. Whiting.

2 Mar., 1889.

8130. Have they taken any action to suppress them? No action.
 8131. Were you formerly a minister of a religious denomination? Yes.
 8132. Have you taken any action to try and improve the morals of the kanakas? I have not.
 8133. Is it done by any white people in town? It is.
 8134. Have they met with any degree of success? They have.
 8135. Is this done by the employers or by other individuals? By the Church of England—by the Rev. Mr. Eva and two or three laymen.
 8136. Then there are counteracting influences at work to try and check this state of things amongst the kanakas? Yes. But these counteracting influences—these religious influences—existed previous to any knowledge of the extent to which this immorality was going on.
 8137. Do they still continue? Yes; the religious influence continues.
 8138. Could you give us any idea of the number of kanakas who attend the places of religious instruction? They attend the Church of England School every Sunday and once a week at night. I should think the average attendance is from forty to fifty.

WEDNESDAY, 13 MARCH, 1889.

BRISBANE.

(At the Houses of Parliament, Brisbane.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

EDWARD WILLIAM KNOX examined:

8139. *By the Chairman*: You are general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company? Yes; and before I was manager, I was for about ten years inspector of the company's mills in New South Wales.
 8140. What experience have you had in the cultivation of the sugar cane and the manufacture of sugar? I have had about twenty years' experience in connection with the inspection and management of the Company's business.
 8141. What are the names of the three plantations that the Company own in Queensland? Homebush, Victoria, and Goondi.
 8142. What is the total area of land in the three plantations? About 38,000 acres.
 8143. How many acres are under cultivation in the three plantations? 6,800; all under cane except eighty acres.
 8144. How many acres of cane were crushed last season? 5,008 of our own cane, and 995 of purchased cane.
 8145. What was the total amount of sugar manufactured? 6,750 tons.
 8146. What amount of capital is invested in the three estates? The total capital expended, independent of interest on the outlay, has been £624,000.
 8147. Was any interest returned on that expenditure during 1888? None.
 8148. What is the average annual expenditure on working expenses? £80,000, exclusive of interest.
 8149. Can you tell us what labour was employed in working the three plantations? The average number employed daily, exclusive of men off duty through sickness or from other causes, were: Europeans, 342; Chinese, 114; kanakas, 607; Javanese, 215; and Cingalese, 27—in all, 1,305; these being independent of salaried Europeans.
 8150. What is the average cost of the coloured classes of labour? For wages, introduction, rations, clothing, hospital fees, &c.: Chinese, 3s. 10½d.; Javanese, 2s. 9d.; and kanakas, 2s. 7d. per day worked.
 8151. What is the total amount of wages paid to Europeans, Chinese, Javanese, kanakas, &c.? Including salaries to European officers, and the cost of rations supplied—such rations being, of course, part of the wages: Europeans, £44,522; Chiuese, £4,977; kanakas, £24,844; Cingalese, £1,276; and Javanese, £7,927—in all, £83,546.
 8152. What was the cost of the machinery on your three plantations, and where was it manufactured? About £220,000, and almost entirely obtained from the United Kingdom, but a small quantity from France. Of the tramway plant, not included in these figures, about one-third is French and the remainder English.
 8153. What is the cost of the annual overhaul and repairs on the three plantations? Machinery, tramways, rolling stock, steam ploughs, &c., from £9,000 to £10,000.
 8154. Of course you are aware that there is a general depression in the sugar industry just now? Yes.
 8155. In other places besides Queensland? Yes.
 8156. Can you state the causes which, in your opinion, have brought about that depression, directing your attention to Queensland particularly? The causes that operate in Queensland do not necessarily operate elsewhere. The main cause is the great fall in the price of sugar which took place in 1884, and is now likely to be permanent. This, speaking generally, involved a loss of a portion of the capital which had been invested in the plantations and mills. Such loss was aggravated by the partial failure of the crop in 1888; to a certain extent also by the expense and difficulty of obtaining the requisite labour, and by the greater cost of fodder and other requisites since the change in the Queensland tariff.
 8157. Can you offer any suggestions by which, in your opinion, the present depression can be relieved? There is reason to believe that sugar can still be produced at a profit in Queensland, especially now that the plantations and mills can be purchased for sums much below the cost of clearing the land and the necessary machinery, provided that owners can have some security that their investment will not be forfeited by the stoppage of the employment of coloured labourers. Without suitable labour the industry must come to an end, and unless planters can have a clear understanding that for some time they are sure of their supply of labour, they must at once prepare for closing, because the clearing of additional

- E. W. Knox. additional land, and in a less degree the improvement of that now under cultivation, by drainage and higher cultivation, are out of the question unless the expense attending these works can be spread over a term of years. The one suggestion I have to offer is that the planters be permitted, under certain restrictions, to import the necessary labour from other countries than China, or, preferably, that the Government undertake this duty, as in the Crown colonies where sugar manufacture is an important industry.
- 13 Mar, 1889. 8158. Of course you are aware that the importation of kanakas ceases at the end of 1890? Yes.
8159. Are you prepared to state what will be the probable effect upon the three plantations that you are general manager of in Queensland, supposing that that part of the Polynesian Act of 1885 is enforced? We should at once make preparations for closing two of the plantations, and arrange to work the third as long as labour was obtainable. Then we must necessarily close this unless some description of coloured labour could be procured.
8160. Have you visited the Northern plantations? No.
8161. Your experience has extended to other countries besides Queensland in the matter of sugar growing? I have spent some time in the West Indies. I have been frequently in Fiji, and I have seen something of the beet industry in Germany and France.
8162. How are the plantations on the Clarence River worked? Entirely by small farmers, who cultivate areas of from, say, five to fifty or sixty acres of cane.
8163. And the company purchase the cane? Yes.
8164. Are the company growing any cane themselves? About 300 acres on the Richmond and from 300 to 500 acres on the Tweed. None on the Clarence.
8165. How many mills have you in operation on the Clarence and Richmond? One large mill on the Clarence, another on the Richmond, and a smaller one on the Tweed.
8166. What labour is employed on the Clarence in growing cane? Entirely European labour.
8167. Do you know whether at any time coloured labour has been employed on the Clarence? No, it has never been employed, except a few over-time kanakas who have come over to New South Wales and who have, as a rule, been paid the same wages as Europeans.
8168. Is the growing of cane by small farmers in the way you have just described remunerative to the farmers? They apparently think so as they have planted a considerable area of cane during the last twelve months.
8169. Have you any idea of the area of land under cane on the Clarence? Between 5,000 and 6,000 acres on the Clarence alone.
8170. How much on the Richmond? Between 8,000 and 10,000 acres.
8171. All grown by small farmers? Yes.
8172. And all the cane is purchased by your company? Oh! no. There have been in operation hitherto a considerable number of small mills that have crushed the cane grown by the owners of the farms on which the mills are situated, and have to a certain extent purchased cane from neighbouring farms.
8173. What is the price per ton of cane paid by the mills? We pay the grower from 9s. to 13s. 6d. a ton, according to the condition of the crop, and we cut it and take it off the ground.
8174. I presume the others who purchase cane from the growers give the same price? Yes; the price is generally uniform.
8175. What would the cane cost delivered at the mill? On the average between 17s. 6d. and 18s. a ton.
8176. Then the company are able to make it pay at that price? Yes; with the help of £5 a ton protection.
8177. Are the whole of the plantations in Fiji carried on with coloured labour? Entirely—East Indians, Coolies, and Fijians.
8178. Can you state the wages which are paid to the Coolies in Fiji? One shilling per day worked, the Coolie feeding himself.
8179. And the others? The Fijians practically about the same.
8180. *By Mr. King*: Do the Coolies get paid for days that they do not work? No; of course the cost to us is considerably more than 1s. a day.
8181. *By the Chairman*: Under what conditions are the coolies introduced into Fiji? They are introduced entirely by the Government, and allotted by them to the planters; the planters paying the cost of introduction on allotment, or, when only a small number of men are needed, having the payments spread over a term of years.
8182. For what term are they introduced? They are indentured for five years.
8183. Is there any undertaking to return them? I think the Government is under an obligation to return the men to India at the end of ten years, if they desire to go.
8184. At their own or the cost of the planter? At the cost of the Government.
8185. You have visited France and Germany? Yes.
8186. And you are acquainted with the bounty system of those two countries? Yes.
8187. Would you be good enough to explain the system as it came under your observation? The bounty in Germany and France is not a direct payment by the State to the manufacturer, but is obtained by the latter through the Government levying a duty on the roots, and allowing a rebate on the exported sugar at a rate of production lower than the actual yield of the beets. That is to say, that if the Government assumed that the average yield from the beets was, say, 10 per cent. of sugar, and the manufacturer obtained 12 per cent, he would, on the exportation of the sugar, get a drawback larger than the duty which he paid on the beets in the proportion of twelve to ten. In Germany, also, the manufacturer has a further advantage in that duty is not levied on the sugar extracted from the molasses, and, in consequence, expensive processes can be adopted for the extraction of such sugar which cannot be profitably used where there is no such advantage to be obtained.
8188. Have your managers on the plantations up north any general instructions to guide them in the management of the plantations, or are they left to their own discretion? The work is left to their own discretion. They have no general written instructions.
8189. I mean more particularly with regard to the management of the coloured races? No; they have no written instructions, except such as are conveyed in ordinary correspondence. There is no regular form of instruction.

8190. Then

8190. Then the food which is supplied to the kanakas is that which is prescribed by Act of Parliament? *E. W. Knox.*
The position that we take up with regard to the coloured races is this. We tell our managers very clearly, when they take charge, that under no circumstances are they to leave anything undone which should be done, in regard to the health or the food of the coloured men they employ; that we will not grumble at any necessary expense that is incurred in those matters, and that, on the other hand, they have the responsibility in the event of any trouble occurring by reason of the coloured labour having been insufficiently fed or improperly looked after. Although there are no written instructions, these matters are most clearly laid down for their guidance, and the managers know very well that if anything goes wrong the responsibility is on them. *13 Mar., 1889.*
8191. *By Mr. King:* The whole of the sugar that you make in Queensland is imported into Sydney? It is all taken to Sydney, Melbourne, or Auckland.
8192. Do you have to pay any duty on importing it into Sydney? Yes; £5 a ton. At all our refineries we work in bond and pay duty on the sugar, as it is taken out of the refinery.
8193. But if the sugar is consumed in New South Wales you have to pay the full duty of £5 a ton? Yes; on the produce of it.
8194. Is there any excise duty on sugar manufactured in New South Wales? None. The duty on imported sugar is £5 a ton.
8195. Then you can afford to pay a much higher price for cane in New South Wales than in Queensland? Certainly. I may illustrate that, by saying that the price fixed in our contracts for cane sold to us in Fiji is from 7s. to 8s. per ton below that which cane of somewhat similar quality costs us in New South Wales.
8196. Is sugar cane cultivation extending in New South Wales? A considerable area was planted during the last year.
8197. Has it extended or diminished of late years—is there an increase or falling off, or does it remain stationary? The area under cultivation is increasing, but a number of small mills have been compelled to stop operations by reason of their inability to work at a profit.
8198. There is not a sufficient quantity of sugar grown in New South Wales to supply the New South Wales market? The largest quantity produced in one year was somewhat more than half the consumption of the colony.
8199. And therefore the growers get the full benefit of the protection of £5 a ton? Unquestionably.
8200. Has your company ever tried the diffusion process for extracting sugar? Yes; we put down a plant for that purpose on the Richmond two years since.
8201. You have had a trial of it? Yes.
8202. With what result? Personally, I am of opinion that the process will, in the future, be universally adopted for the manufacture of sugar from cane where cheap fuel and a good supply of water can be obtained.
8203. Has the result of your working proved profitable—did you get a larger return? Our working has been only experimental, but it has convinced us that a larger quantity of sugar can be extracted from the cane by means of diffusion than by any other process.
8204. Will that larger quantity of sugar pay for the larger quantity of fuel that is required? That depends on the cost of the fuel—I believe so when the cost of coal would not exceed from 25s. to 30s. a ton.
8205. Will the result of this experiment induce you to adopt the diffusion principle at your mills in Queensland? Diffusion can only be adopted at factories, as now arranged, by the expenditure of a large sum of money, and under present circumstances it is out of the question to invest any additional capital in Queensland factories.
8206. I think you said that the sugar market was depressed all over the world? A low level of prices has been reached which is likely to be permanent. You can hardly call it depression now. It is a fall in price.
8207. There is a diffusion mill at Cudgen, on the Tweed? Yes.
8208. Does that belong to the company? No; to Mr. John Robb, of Melbourne.
8209. Have you seen that mill at work, or do you know anything about it? I have not seen it, but I understand that the proprietor is well satisfied with the results.
8210. By whom was the machinery made? It was made by a German firm. Ours was by a French firm.
8211. Is it your opinion that the sugar industry is more depressed in Queensland at the present time than in other sugar-producing countries? Yes; because the cost of production is higher.
8212. Do the company find that sugar growing is more profitable in Fiji than in Queensland? We can produce sugar there at a lower cost although the cane is not so sweet as the Queensland cane.
8213. *By Mr. Cooley:* But still you produce the actual sugar at a lower cost? Yes.
8214. *By Mr. King:* What is the amount of fall in the price of sugar since 1884? From £10 to £12 a ton in Australia.
8215. You do not see any prospect of that fall being recovered? No; partly because there has been a general reduction in the values of all produce, and partly because since the fall took place the cost of production of sugar has been considerably reduced. I may illustrate that statement by pointing out that in Germany the yield of sugar from the beets has been increased and the cost of working has at the same time been lessened, and it is understood that for the first year since 1884 several new factories will be in operation in 1889. In 1887 the yield of sugar throughout Germany was 1 ton of 88 per cent. N.T. to 7.4 tons of beet; in Anhalt it was 1 to 7.33; in Saxony 1 to 7.45. In 1886 the yield was 1 to 8.21; in 1887, 1 to 8.45; in 1888, in consequence of the damage done by the early frost, it is expected that the yield will be 1 to 7.63. In some cases the beet contains between 19 and 20 per cent. of sugar.
8216. You said that it was possible if cheap labour could be procured that the sugar industry could be carried on profitably now that plantations could be bought at a very much lower price than they had cost? Yes.
8217. It is your opinion then that simply those plantations that are already formed can be carried on, but that there will be no inducement to extend the sugar industry? No inducement to extend new plantations, because there is at the present moment in Queensland ample machinery to manufacture a much larger crop than has yet been taken off.
8218. Your

E. W. Knox. 8218. Your opinion is that with cheap labour the plantations now in existence might manage to carry on, but that there would be no inducement to form new plantations? I think that with a certain supply of coloured labour the present plantations would be carried on, and must necessarily be extended, because employment has to be found between the seasons for the hands who are not required for cultivating the fields.

13 Mar., 1889.

8219. *By Mr. Cowley*: You stated in reply to one question that if the present Act now in force is not repealed you will close your mills in Queensland—two at once, and the other would follow? Yes.

8220. Where would you put those mills—would you take them to New South Wales or Fiji? I think that employment could be found for the machinery either in New South Wales or Fiji.

8221. Do the small cane growers on the Clarence own the land, or do they rent it? I cannot tell you the exact proportion of rented land and land held in fee simple by the cultivators, but I think it is about one-third rented and two-thirds fee simple.

8222. Do the proprietors or leaseholders do most of the cultivation themselves, or do they employ other labour? They do the work personally, and employ additional labour when needed for breaking up the land and at trashing time.

8223. Do they employ the members of their families at the work? The boys, I think, always; the girls very seldom.

8224. What is the general nature of the land on the Clarence and Richmond Rivers? The land which is cultivated is almost exclusively the alluvial deposit on the banks of the river. It is on the Clarence, a strip on an average of about ten chains wide on the main river and the delta channels, which are very numerous. On the Richmond the alluvial land is wider, and there is in addition a very large extent of rich country known as the "big scrub," on which it is probable that cane can be grown to a very large extent, though the effects of the frost on the crops growing there cannot yet be spoken of with certainty.

8225. Is the alluvial land on the Clarence very rich? Very rich; and continually refreshed by floods.

8226. Are the crops heavier there than the average crop in Queensland? I think that in portions of the district, which are not touched by frost, the average crop is at least as high as that of any district in Queensland.

8227. Is the whole of this land free from stumps and worked by horses? It is all worked by horses.

8228. Do they trash the cane? The cane is almost always trashed. We pay a higher price for trashed than for untrashed cane.

8229. How much higher do you pay for trashed cane? Between 3s. and 4s. a ton.

8230. Do you give rewards for the best kept farms? Not now.

8231. Are we to understand from you that when the Government introduces Indian coolies into Fiji, they permit the smaller employers to extend the payment of passage money over five years? I do not know the exact term over which it is extended, but it certainly is deferred over a term of years.

8232. Is that done simply to encourage the small farmers? Entirely. The large planter has to pay cash on the allotment of the labour, besides a payment of £6 a head with his application for the introduction of the men.

8233. What is the total cost to the employers of the introduction fees for these men? About £23 apiece; women and children over a certain age included.

8234. Don't you think that the £23 a head paid to the Government covers the cost of the return passage? We have never seen the exact figures; but a very small proportion of the Coolies desire to return. They settle down on little farms of their own, and do not want to go.

8235. What is the actual total cost per day of Indian Coolie labour? Something under 1s. 6d.; which covers the pay, hospital expense, and cost of introduction.

8236. Do you employ them in preference to kanakas on account of their being cheaper? Although the rate of wages paid to the Coolies is less than the cost of the kanakas per day, I do not know that the work is done at a cheaper rate. The climate of Fiji is not suited to the kanaka, and we have not for some years introduced any.

8237. We noticed that there were a very large number of boys in the Ingham Hospital, and I would like, to know if you are prepared to establish a hospital at Victoria on the same principle as that at Goondi where all trivial cases could be treated, and thereby obviating the cost of sending so many to the Ingham Hospital? We certainly would have no objection; but we are in such matters, to a great extent, in the hands of the Government medical officer of the district and the Polynesian inspector, and are compelled to carry out their wishes in these matters. If they require us to send the men into the Ingham Hospital we must do so, whatever our own opinion or wishes in the matter may be; and, as I stated before, the general instructions to our managers are, in such matters, to do everything that is necessary for the health of the kanakas. With reference to the suggestions that have been made concerning the treatment of kanakas at Victoria plantation, I desire to bring before the Commission the following facts relative to the expenditure and death rate on the three plantations belonging to the company in Queensland during the years 1887 and 1888: In 1888 the cost of the food supplied to the kanakas at Victoria was greater per working day than at either of the other plantations. The cost of the hospital attendance was greater than at Homebush, and less than at Goondi; and the cost of the other supplies at Victoria was also greater than at the other two places. The percentage of workers at Victoria was greater than at Homebush, and one per cent. less than at Goondi, the figures being respectively: 82.48 for Victoria; 80.7 for Homebush, and 83.5 for Goondi; showing that there could not have been very much, if any, more sickness at Victoria than at the other plantations. During 1887 the food supplied at Victoria cost more than that given at Homebush, and the hospital attendance somewhat less. The percentage of workers at Victoria in that year was also a trifle less than at either of the two other plantations, the average for the whole for the two respective years being almost exactly the same. As to the mortality, I can say that, during 1887 and 1888, there were at Victoria sixteen deaths for 150,000 working days. At Goondi, there were during the same time thirty deaths for 144,000 working days; at Homebush, in 1887, there were four deaths for 22,000 working days; and in 1888, seven deaths for 30,500 working days. It will be seen from these figures that the mortality at Victoria has been much less than at Goondi and Homebush, and I believe it will compare favourably with that of any plantation in Queensland.

8238. You say that under present circumstances you are not prepared to invest more capital in the sugar industry in Queensland? Yes.

8239. What are those circumstances—what do you specially refer to? The uncertainty as to the supply of labour.

8240. Does

8240. Does the matter of extension depend entirely on the labour question being settled satisfactorily? E. W. Knox.
Yes.
8241. Are you manuring your land in Queensland? Only to a slight extent. We have not gone in for the same improvements in the cultivation as we have initiated elsewhere, owing to the uncertainty of the supply of labour. 13 Mar., 1889.
8242. You stated that you purchased somewhere about 900 acres of cane last year? Yes.
8243. Did you get as much as you wanted? No.
8244. Up to what extent would you be prepared to buy in Queensland to keep your present mills going? We are prepared to purchase to a very large extent—indeed, would prefer to purchase all our cane rather than to grow it.
8245. Then in that case you would lease your land to farmers? Yes.
8246. Have you leased any at present on any of your estates? Only one block on the Johnstone.
8247. On what terms is it leased? A clearing lease. We are paying a fixed price for the cane on delivery.
8248. How many years does the lease extend over? Eight years.
8249. Do you charge any rent for the land at all? I think not.
8250. Can you tell us the number of miles of tramway you have on your estates? We have fifty miles of permanent line, twenty-four miles of portable line, 1,500 waggons, and nine locomotives.
8251. Have you double crushing at all your mills? Yes.
8252. Do you macerate? Yes.
8253. Is your machinery of the very best description, or are there better mills in existence? I think that during the last few years there have been some considerable improvements in sugar machinery brought to perfection, which we have not applied in Queensland. When the Queensland mills were erected, the plant supplied to them was of the best description.
8254. Do these improvements apply to the crushing or extraction of the sugar from the juice? Both.
8255. Do you intend to introduce any of these improvements into Queensland? Not at the present time.
8256. Would you do so if you were carrying on for a number of years longer? Yes; we would make modifications in the plant as opportunity offered.
8257. Do you strive to avoid all waste by employing analytical chemists? The whole of our work is carried on under chemical supervision, and we are now introducing the same system of supervision in regard to the agricultural work.
8258. Can you tell us the average percentage of sugar you extract from the cane? Speaking roughly, we obtain three-fourths of the obtainable sugar from the cane.
8259. Do you do anything with your molasses? We put it on the fields.
8260. You do not use it for rum making? Not in Queensland. We distil in New South Wales.
8261. Is there any reason for not distilling here? The reason for not utilising our molasses in Queensland by establishing distilleries is that the distilling power in Queensland is already sufficient for the spirit consumed there. If another distillery were established, the price would fall to an unremunerative level.
8262. We notice that you employ a great many Chinamen—do you employ them in preference to kanakas, or on account of not being able to get enough kanakas? The Chinese are mainly employed at felling and contract work, for which the kanakas are not suited.
8263. *By the Chairman:* Can you offer any suggestion by which tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing can be promoted? The climate of Queensland, south of the Johnstone, is, I imagine, unsuitable for any tropical products which could be grown in rotation with sugar cane, unless it be rice. Whether rice could be cultivated largely without extensive irrigation—for which there are not any facilities, and many hindrances, such as 15 per cent. duty on the plant—is, I think, doubtful, and it seems to me almost hopeless to expect that, with the highly paid labour which has to be used in Queensland, any crop of this sort for which expensive machinery or skilled labour are not wanted could be raised in Queensland and sold at remunerative prices against the produce of India, China, Burmah, and Java, except in the local markets, and then only if it were protected against outside competition. Coloured labour must also be provided for any crops that can be grown in the tropics. The systematic employment of Europeans in most of the agricultural operations north of Bundaberg I believe to be impossible.
8264. *By Mr. King:* Can you tell us what the cost of an agricultural labourer is in Java? 6d. per day.
8265. And find themselves? Yes.
8266. What is the cost of the agricultural labourer in Germany? The men get from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. a day for agricultural work, working from daylight to dark, with short breaks for meals. In the factories, working eleven hours per day, men get from 1s. 6d. to 2s.; boys and women from 9d. to 1s. 3d., and in all cases find themselves. In France the factory wages are from 1s. 9d. to 2s., men working twelve hours a day, night and day, and Sundays.
8267. What are the French wages in the field? I do not know. On the whole in Germany the wages in the field are somewhat higher than in the factory, but the factory work is carried on at a time when other outside work is checked, and when the men in the building trades are to a certain extent out of employment, and look for work in the factories.
8268. *By Mr. Cowley:* Can you tell us anything about the disease in cane which is known as sereh? I can only say that it is believed to be extending in Java, and by the last mail we had advices from our agent there that it was reported to have broken out in a district not hitherto affected, and that they feared if the report was true the out-put of the coming crop would be materially reduced.

EDWARD BARROW FORREST examined:

8269. *By the Chairman:* You are a member of the Legislative Council of Queensland? Yes.
8270. You act for the Colonial Sugar Company? Yes; I am managing director for Parbury, Lamb, and Co., who are agents for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.
8271. How long have you been acting in that capacity? I have been with the company myself for the last thirty years. I was formerly in their employ.
8272. How long has your agency extended over the sugar plantations of the company in Queensland? Since they were established.

E. B. Forrest.

13 Mar., 1889

8273. Can

- E. B. Forrest. 8273. Can you give us any statistics as to the price of sugar some three or four years ago and now?
 Yes. I have classed the sugars into three sorts. Whites first and second, yellows first and second, and, in addition to those, ration sugars. For first whites in 1882 the price ranged from £36 to £28 per ton; second whites from £28 to £23. You will understand that some portion of that variation in price is due to the different samples of different descriptions of sugar. Yellows ranged during 1882 from £24 to £20; ration sugar ranged from £22 to £16. In 1883 first whites ranged from £34 to £28; second whites, £27 to £25; yellows, £27 to £19; rations, from £17 to £14. In 1884 first whites ranged from £30 to £20; second whites, £26 to £18; yellows, £24 to £14; rations, £13 to £10. In 1885 first whites ranged from £30 to £18; second whites, £19 to £17; yellows, £17 to £13; and rations were quoted at £10 throughout the whole year. In 1886 first whites were worth £20; second whites, £19; yellows, £14 to £11; and rations, £11 to £10. In 1887 first whites rose again. They sold at from £26 to £17; second whites, £25 to £14 10s.; yellows, £15 to £11; and rations, £12 to £9. In 1888 first whites ranged from £22 to £18; second whites from £19 to £16; yellows, £17 to £13; and rations, £12 to £10. That brings us up to the end of last year, and this year first whites are now worth £26; second whites, about £24; yellows, £21; and rations, £13 to £14. That brings us up to the present date.
8274. What in your opinion has led to the fluctuation in prices during those years? Over-production no doubt, largely due to the production of beet sugar. This market of course has been affected like all other markets.
8275. Can you state of your own knowledge whether beet-root sugar comes much into competition with Queensland sugars here in Brisbane? Not here directly.
8276. It is the competition in the open market that affects the colonial price? The market at home generally governs the colonial price. Beet sugar is very largely consumed there, and consequently there is less draw on the sugar from Mauritius. The market here follows as a rule the market at home, in sugar as in most other things.
8277. By Mr. King: What proportion of the Queensland sugar crop was exported beyond the local demand of the colony—say in 1886 or 1887? The quantity of Queensland sugar exported in 1886 was 44,510 tons.
8278. What do you reckon the local consumption during that year was? The estimated production was 56,859 tons, which left for consumption 12,349 tons. As a matter of fact, the consumption here is about 15,000 tons a year. Then in 1887 the estimated production was 57,960, and there were exported 41,890 tons which left for the home consumption 16,070 tons.
8279. How is the price of sugar in the colony fixed, and what operates to fix the price of sugar in this colony? The price which it can be imported at from other places. We have got, as you know, the benefit of £6 13s. 4d. per ton on the higher class of sugars, and £5 a ton on the lower sugars. If you import sugar from Sydney at a certain price and add the duty to it, that would fix the price here.
8280. Do the growers of sugar get the advantage of that protective duty in the colony, or is the price of sugar fixed by the price which they net on the exported sugar? If they have to compete in the Melbourne market with foreign sugars they have to take their chance.
8281. Does the Queensland sugar grower who sells in the colony get £5 a ton more for his sugar than the man who exports to Melbourne, or is it the Melbourne price that rules the market? The Melbourne and Sydney prices rule the market. I do not think the export of Queensland sugar has very much to do with the southern markets. The Queensland grower does at times get the benefit of the duty but not always. You can understand that sugar here varies in price, and apart altogether from outside influences prices here are forced up or down as the case may be. If I want for this month, 1,500 tons and there are only 1,000 tons here, naturally prices stiffen; if on the other hand you have 3,000 tons to supply a market requiring only 1,500 tons the prices ease off. That affects the market at all times. I say that occasionally, and frequently possibly, the planter gets the benefit of the differential duty and occasionally he does not.
8282. I do not think you fully understand me. Three-fourths of the Queensland sugars are exported; do the holders of the remaining one-fourth get £5 a ton more for the sugar sold in the colony than they would if the sugar was sent to Melbourne? Not necessarily.
8283. Do they get any more? They do get a higher price here than they would get in Melbourne.
8284. How much more do you suppose they would get—if the sugar which was sold here last year at £22 had been sent to Melbourne, what would it have netted? £18, £19, or £20 a ton as the case might be.
8285. On an average then I take it that the Queensland sugar benefits to the extent of about £3 a ton from the protective duty? I should say £2 or £3 a ton as a rule.
8286. I suppose you have had large experience as a commercial man in regard to the charges made for dealing with sugar—are you aware what the charges are? I have been in the sugar trade ever since sugar was manufactured in the colony and before. The charges here for selling sugar—agents' charges—are 6½ per cent. That is known in the trade as "The Mackay rate." The charges were established when Mackay sugars first came down here, and they have ruled ever since. Those charges have ruled in Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane.
8287. What does that charge cover? It covers commission, *del credere*, receiving, storing, delivering, and insurance; everything, in fact, except freight, wharfage, and interest.
8288. What are the rates of freight from the northern ports? They have varied considerably of late years. There is a very large scale.
8289. As a commercial man of large experience do you think that the rates of freight and insurance on this coast at the present time are excessive as applied to such an industry as the sugar industry? I think both insurance and freights are high. Insurance is heavier here than in any other part of Australia, and as for freights, they are considerably higher in the north than they are in the south.
8290. What is the cause of the insurance charges being higher on this coast—have there been any losses? Yes; but they are working under what they call a scale. There is a kind of combination, and the rates have been kept up.
8291. Is this coast not as well lighted as any other part of the Australian coast? Better lighted than any I know of.
8292. It is sheltered almost the whole way? It is safe enough and can be worked easily enough by any sort of steamer.
8293. You are not aware of any special causes which would justify an increase in the rates of insurance? Certainly not. My opinion is that the rates should have been reduced long since.

8294. Are

8294. Are you aware whether there is a regular scale of charges from the different northern ports for E. B. Forrest. the carriage of sugar, or are the charges according to arrangement? There is a regular scale. The two companies practically work together. 13 Mar., 1889.

8295. Does the Colonial Sugar Company get its sugar carried by these steamers? They do; by contract. They have a special agreement. The companies contract for the season's output.

8296. Then I suppose they obtain more favourable terms than a small planter would? They do. The bigger the parcel the cheaper it is carried. That applies to everything. If they did not get freights at a decent rate they would send their own boats up.

8297. Have the rates of freight and insurance on the northern coast ever been considered by the Chamber of Commerce in Brisbane? I think not. I am not aware of it.

8298. Don't you think that the development of that part of the country might possibly be retarded by excessive freights and charges? Undoubtedly. I tell you I think the rates are too high.

8299. And that must injure the trade of the port of Brisbane also? It adds to the expense of working it, and diminishes the trade. When you look at the rate paid for the carriage of coal from Newcastle to Melbourne, and the rate from Mackay to Brisbane, the thing is perfectly ridiculous.

8300. What is the rate for sugar from Mackay to Brisbane at the present time? About 12s. 6d. a ton.

8301. *By Mr. Cowley*: You have given us the ruling rates for sugar from 1882 up to the present time; can you also give us the rates for the introduction of kanakas during the same term, including the passage money and Government charges? Yes; we have been importing kanakas for the company ever since the sugar industry was established here. In 1881 we paid £12 15s. and £13 per head passage money. The capitation fee then was 30s. In 1882, £14 10s. and £16 10s., the capitation fee being 30s. In 1883 and 1884, £20, £18 10s., and £22 10s., the capitation fee being 30s. In 1885 and 1886 we paid £25 10s. with a capitation fee of £3. In 1887 we paid £22, with a capitation fee of £3. In 1888 we paid £22, £23, £24, £25, and £26, with a capitation fee of £3. And in 1889 we are paying £21 10s., £23, and I believe £24 has been given this year already, with a capitation of £3.

8302. Do you account for this great rise through the demand there has been for kanakas? Partly so, and owing to the more stringent regulations, ships cannot run at the old rates.

8303. Do you think this cost could be materially reduced if the Government took the introduction of kanakas into their own hands? I really could not tell you. There is the experience of other places where the Government have taken the thing into their own hands, and the cost has been much less, but I am not prepared to say.

8304. You said that some time ago there were times when the planter got the benefit of the duty—in times of scarcity. I suppose you mean from that, that he would get the benefit if he held his sugar? Certainly.

8305. But as it is now, I presume it is the merchant who buys the sugar, who gets the benefit? Certainly not. As a matter of fact the planter gets an advance, and he gets the benefit of the rise. At the present time we are holding sugars on which we have advanced four months ago. The planters will get the full benefit of that. We advanced so much a ton, and they leave the sugar to us to do the best we can with. We believe that by holding it now, we shall get a better price a month hence than we could get now, but the planter will get the full benefit of that. That is a common practice. With all our clients the practice has been to advance and the planters leave it to us to hold the sugar as we like. We hold the sugar as long as we think fit. It is a simple question to them of interest on the advance. When the sugar is sold they have to pay interest on the advance.

8306. *By the Chairman*: In reference to the protective duty of £6 13s. 4d. that we have upon sugar, under any circumstances that is a substantial assistance to the grower of sugar? It is a substantial assistance to him, undoubtedly. If you took it off you would find the difference.

8307. Although the benefit to the grower who sends his sugar to Melbourne might be only £2 or £3 a ton, yet at the same time the duty acts against the importation of sugar? Undoubtedly, it prevents importation.

8308. So that in that respect the planter has a substantial advantage? Unquestionably. The full benefit of the £5 a ton is not always obtainable. A good many circumstances govern it. If the market is overstocked and a man sells and must sell, he has to take a lower price.

8309. *By Mr. Cowley*: The benefit has only been derived on one-fourth of the total output, because three-fourths of the sugar has been exported? It could only apply to what is sold here.

8310. So that it only benefits the planter to the extent of one-fourth of the local output? To the extent of the sugar consumed in Queensland and no more. In a good crop to the extent of about one-fourth, and in a bad crop to the extent of about one-third. The crop last year was something like 28,000 tons; exported, 17,000 tons odd; retained for consumption, 10,648 tons.

8311. *By the Chairman*: Can you offer any suggestions by which the sugar industry can be relieved from its present depression? Of course I have my own ideas about some of the things. The price has had a material effect on the trade, but I do not think that so much is attributable to the fall in price as many people think. I think that the price of sugar, as of everything else, will always regulate itself in time. It is a thing that cures itself; it is curing itself now as regards sugar. I think that what has established some of the "funk," if I may use the word, has been the uncertainty as to labour. At one time people came prepared to embark money in sugar, but I am certain there is not a man left who would put any money into it now in the face of the present prospect. People who wanted money to extend their operations could not get it. Capitalists would not risk lending money, because they can see no certainty in it. Two causes have contributed to the depression—one is the price of sugar, which is correcting itself, and has corrected itself in every branch of trade; and the other cause is the uncertainty about labour. Of course I need not say that my own opinion is that sugar will never be grown successfully here without some coloured labour, and I look upon the kanakas as being the least objectionable.

8312. Then what do you think will be the effect upon the sugar industry, supposing that the importation of kanakas ceases on the 31st December, 1890? I think the production of sugar in Queensland will cease. One of two things must be done. People have either to go on or stop. Going on means being supplied with labour; and if the planters are not supplied with labour I do not hesitate to say that nine-tenths of the plantations must collapse.

THURSDAY, 14 MARCH, 1889.

(At the Houses of Parliament, Brisbane.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

JAMES STODDART examined:

- J. Stoddart. 8313. *By the Chairman:* You are a merchant carrying on business in the city of Brisbane? Yes.
8314. You have had considerable dealings, commercially, in sugar? Yes.
- 14Mar., 1889. 8315. For how many years have you been engaged in that business? Between twelve and thirteen years.
8316. When did you first discover, in the course of your business, a decrease in the price of Queensland-made sugar? I should say about four or five years ago.
8317. Can you tell us the price you were obtaining for sugar formerly and the reduced price which was subsequently paid for it? We used to get from £34 up to £37 a ton for the best white sugars. That was, perhaps, nine years ago.
8318. And what has been the price at more recent dates? Within the last three or four years I suppose we have averaged £22, that is taking the year all round. In the crushing season the best white sugar goes down to as low as £19.
8319. Have you exported sugar to the other colonies on behalf of Queensland growers? Yes.
8320. Have you found a depression in the price in those markets? Yes.
8321. Were the prices obtained in Sydney and Melbourne higher or lower than the prices obtained in Queensland? Lower.
8322. Can you state the proportion? During crushing season I should think they very nearly reach the export level here—perhaps within £1 a ton.
8323. That is, sugar would be £1 or 30s. lower? Yes; in the height of the crushing season. The exported sugar comes within £1 of the price realised in Queensland.
8324. Can you say, from your business experience, that the local producer gets the full benefit of the Queensland protective duty? Certainly not as long as there is sugar exported. So long as our production is over our consumption he does not. We lose the benefit of the duty altogether.
8325. Have you ever gone into the question mathematically so as to really discover whether the producer does get any advantage? My opinion is formed through being interested in an estate myself, and I know that we do not.
8326. *By Mr. King:* There being a duty of £5 a ton, does the Queensland grower get £5 a ton more for the sugar sold in the local market than for the sugar that he exports? No; certainly not.
8327. Does he get anything more? He would at certain times of the year; but the grower, as a rule, does not get that; it is the speculator who gets it—the man who buys a stock of sugar and sells between seasons.
8328. How much does this advantage amount to?—Do they ever get the full £5 a ton in Queensland more than if the sugar was sent to the Melbourne market? That would depend upon the state of the Melbourne and Sydney markets. Often the Melbourne market is low, and they could send sugar up here.
8329. Is not the price of Queensland sugar governed by the price obtainable in the outside market? It is in two ways. Out of season, it is because sugar can be brought in here, and the price here would have to be regulated by the price in Sydney or Melbourne, always taking the duty into consideration. When we are exporting sugar in the height of the season we entirely depend upon the Southern markets.
8330. The extent to which the Queensland grower is benefited by the protective duty is the excess in price he could obtain in the colony over that which he could obtain by exporting the sugar? Yes.
8331. How much would that amount to? It would amount to very little—perhaps to £1 or 30s. a ton, according to the quality of the sugar that was sold here; but only a small quantity would be sold here, and there would be no advantage at all to be derived on the exported sugar.
8332. What are the commission charges in connection with the disposal of sugar? The general thing is 5 per cent. commission, guarantee, and bank discount. The sugar is sold on terms.
8333. Is there not what is known as “the Mackay rate” for transactions in sugar—a rate which covers everything? There is a rate of commission which covers everything.
8334. Are you agent for other places besides Yengarie? I am agent for places in the Mackay district, Bundaberg, and the South.
8335. Is there not a recognised rate which is known as “the Mackay rate” for commercial charges in connection with sugar? It has never come under my notice.
8336. What are the charges which have come under your notice? The 5 per cent. commission and guarantee. Cartage, weighing, and everything else, 5s. a ton. That would be 5 per cent. and 5s. a ton for cartage, &c., and the sales are discounted at bank rates.
8337. Then 5½ per cent. covers everything? Yes; but does not include *del credere*. 5 per cent. and 5s. a ton would cover everything except bank discount.
8338. What are the rates of freight on this coast for sugar from port to port? They vary. 8s. from Maryborough to Brisbane; 10s. from Bundaberg to Brisbane; 15s. from Mackay; and 15s. from Townsville.
8339. How do those rates compare with the charges made for carrying other descriptions of produce? They are very low. They are very much lower than the freights on goods going up the coast.
8340. What are the freights for carrying between the other ports—say from Bundaberg to Rockhampton, or Mackay to Rockhampton? I could not say definitely, but I believe they are about in proportion to the rates I have named.
8341. What rates of insurance are charged on this coast? From 5s. to 7s. 6d. per cent.

8342. How

8342. How does that compare with the charges going south from Brisbane? They are just about the same. They insure the same going up north as going down to Melbourne and Sydney. One or two places are a little higher—2s. 6d. per cent. higher. J. Stoddart.
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8343. Do you consider the charges for freight and insurance reasonable? Yes; I think so. Very reasonable as they are adjusted now. They have been exorbitant in times gone by.
8344. When were they adjusted? Some little time before the British India Company came here the A.S.N. Co. reduced their freights a little.
8345. These freights are settled by the agents of the steamers? Yes.
8346. And there is practically no competition? Only to some of the ports. There is competition between here and Maryborough, Townsville, and Rockhampton; but there is no competition with Mackay and Cairns. To Bundaberg there is a little steamer, called the "Lady Musgrave," running now; but before that, the company used to charge 17s. 6d. a ton to Bundaberg.
8347. Have not Howard Smith and Co. and the A.U.S.N. Co. agreed to maintain a certain rate? Yes.
8348. So that they are really not competing? It can scarcely be called competition.
8349. Are you aware whether the A.U.S.N. Co. has adopted a form of bill of lading by which they are not answerable for anything whatever? Yes; they try to make themselves answerable for nothing; but I always find them very willing to settle any claim I have.
8350. They settle the claim in spite of the bill of lading? I think so. I always find that they meet me when there is any damage to sugar or short landed sugar.
8351. I suppose residing in Brisbane as you do they would be more likely to settle with you than with a small producer up the country? That is very likely. It might be a matter of policy with them.
8352. I understand you to say in reference to the price of sugar that the fall in the price from 1882 down to the present time is fully £10 a ton? Well, I would scarcely like from memory to say a £10 fall had occurred during the last five years. It commenced to fall a little before that.
8353. You said that in 1882 first sugars were worth £34 to £35 a ton? I said about nine years ago we used to get from £34 to £35 a ton.
8354. And last year the price was £22 to £19 a ton? It averaged during the year £22, falling down to £19 in the crushing season.
8355. That would show a fall of over £10 between the first period that you speak of and the last? Yes; but I do not think the last five years covers the whole of that fall. It may have commenced before.
8356. Are you a member of the Chamber of Commerce? Yes.
8357. Has that body taken any steps to obtain a free interchange of products between Queensland and the other colonies? Yes; there was a movement about three years ago to consider some proposals made by Victoria.
8358. I suppose you went into the subject on that occasion? Yes.
8359. Did you consider that it was feasible? I considered it feasible when considerably boiled down on the part of Victoria. It was not feasible in the way in which it was proposed.
8360. What would be the effect on the price of sugar if we had a treaty with Victoria or South Australia by which Queensland sugars could be imported duty free into those colonies? It would be rather difficult to say, because we have the Colonial Sugar Company to contend with in Victoria. It depends upon how they would look upon it.
8361. I suppose the effect would be that the Queensland grower would gain the amount of duty which he has now to pay? Yes; but it is a question whether the market would give him the whole of that, because the company down there may put prices down to prevent it.
8362. How could the company put down prices; they would have to import their own sugar? They have an advantage of £1 a ton now. I think they have £1 a ton advantage if the sugar is refined there. That is by the last alteration made in the tariff.
8363. Then you think that the Queensland grower would not benefit to the full amount of the duty which is now levied on Queensland sugar? I think it is a little doubtful whether he would get the full amount. He would get a great advantage by it certainly, but I doubt whether he would get the full advantage.
8364. By Mr. Cowley: That is in Victoria and New South Wales, but it would not apply to South Australia? No; in South Australia I think he would get the full advantage.
8365. You say that the shipper sometimes loses from £1 to 30s. a ton by sending his sugar to Melbourne—is that not after paying duty and all expenses? Yes.
8366. Is it not a fact that during the crushing season when sugar is plentiful owners often realise quite as much or more for their sugars in the southern markets than they do in the local markets? That may be so. My experience is that they generally do better here, but they cannot sell any quantity here. For what they do sell they generally get a slight advantage.
8367. Then it is only at exceptional times when sugars are scarce that the manufacturer reaps the benefit of the duty? That is all.
8368. And then only if he is in a position to hold his sugars? Exactly.
8369. You are agent for other manufactories besides Yengarie and Millmquin? Yes.
8370. Do you ever make them advances on sugar at the market rates and hold the sugar on their behalf to sell to the best advantage when a rise takes place? I generally sell at once. If I make an advance to a planter against his sugar I reserve the right to myself to sell it when it suits me.
8371. And he gets the advantage of the rise, less the interest he pays? If I hold it for him for a better market, he gets the advantage of it and pays me interest on the advance.
8372. Do you often do that—is it the rule or the exception? Well, it is rather the exception.
8373. Is that the fault of the planters—is it their desire to sell, as a rule? The planter, as a rule, is always in want of money, and he has to realise his sugar directly it is made.
8374. When making advances in these cases, how much do you advance? Of course that very often depends upon who the party is, but we advance very close up to the value of the sugar, allowing for a possible fluctuation in the market.
8375. Have you known many instances in which the planter has derived substantial benefit from this mode of proceeding? No; I have not.
8376. You cannot say that it is customary with other people besides yourself to do it? No; I do not think it is at all customary.

J. Stoddart. 8377. *By the Chairman:* Do you think that the mercantile community or the general community of the city of Brisbane are much interested in the success or failure of the sugar industry? I think they are very much interested in the success of the industry.

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8378. Do you know whether the Chamber of Commerce has ever taken the question into consideration with a view of offering suggestions to this Commission by which the industry can be assisted? I do not think they have. In fact they have done nothing for some years. They are only just beginning to have life again.

8379. Would you not have thought that the question was of sufficient magnitude to have attracted their attention? Yes, certainly.

8380. Have you thought the matter over in your own mind, and can you offer any suggestions by which you think the industry can be improved? There are many ways of suggesting improvements, but I do not know whether they would be acceptable. I think the regulation of the labour traffic would go a very long way towards assisting the industry. It should be put upon a proper basis. What I mean is, that the Government might take a closer supervision over it in the way, perhaps, of establishing depôts in the islands, and gathering the labour under guarantees from the planters. If some definite form of reliable labour could be assured so that the planters could get facilities from monetary institutions at reasonable rates of interest, it would be a very great assistance to the industry. At present the planters cannot get money under any circumstances, or if they do get a little money they have to pay interest at usurers' rates for it.

8381. Do you think that the unwillingness of the banks and monetary institutions to advance on sugar plantations arises wholly from the uncertainty of the labour question or from other causes? Of course there are other causes, but I think it is from the uncertainty of the labour question principally, and the doubtfulness of what the planters are going to do when the labour does cease. If a lot of the large estates cannot get labour it means shutting up.

8382. *By Mr. King:* Is the sugar industry of considerable importance to the commercial community of Queensland and Brisbane? I think so—of very large importance.

8383. I suppose there is a large amount of merchandise of different kinds consumed on the plantations as well as the sugar produced, which is dealt with? Yes; they are very large consumers of stores of all kinds and of coal. Their freights are of very great importance to the railways in the different districts, both in the matter of sugar and other goods carried. Bags alone are a considerable item.

8384. The freights are also of considerable importance to the steam companies? Of great importance.

8385. Have you any idea of the manner in which the prosperity of the commercial community of Brisbane would be affected if this industry were to die out completely? It would materially affect a great many of the iron yards in different places, and it would affect the shipping very much at a good many of the ports as well as Brisbane.

8386. Does the trade give any employment to the working classes in Brisbane? Not so much in Brisbane as in the sugar districts. Of course every steamer coming down with sugar gives employment to a lot of wharf labourers and carters in Brisbane.

8387. Would it produce any perceptible effect on the prosperity of Brisbane if this trade went out of existence? I should not like to say that it would affect Brisbane particularly. It would affect it to a slight degree.

8388. *By Mr. Coudey:* Would it not affect Brisbane in the price of sugar—would not the people of Brisbane have to pay a great deal more for their sugar? They would have to pay nearly double.

8389. You say that the Chamber of Commerce three years ago debated the question of reciprocity? Yes.

8390. I think I understood you to say that the terms offered by Victoria were unfavourable? Yes; Victoria wanted too much.

8391. Did the Chamber of Commerce object to the principle, or only to the terms offered by Victoria? Only to the terms.

8392. They were in favour of admitting the principle if it could be worked equitably? Yes.

8393. Are there not very large supplies sent from Brisbane to the sugar plantations—supplies of stores and produce? A fair quantity from Brisbane.

8394. You, as agent for some of the plantations, purchase supplies for them? Very little. We merely sell the sugar. They generally buy their stores at Bundaberg or the towns nearest to where the plantations are. The southern planters on the Logan, Albert, and Coomera, get their supplies from Brisbane, but there are not many of them now.

JAMES MUNRO examined:

J. Munro. 8395. *By the Chairman:* You are manager in Brisbane for the British India Company and the A.U.S.N. Company? Yes.

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8396. You carry fruit for the growers in the northern ports of the colony to Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney? Yes.

8397. Have any complaints reached you as manager of the company of what the shippers allege to be the unsatisfactory mode of transit? Yes; from time to time they have made complaints.

8398. Have any claims been made upon the company for loss byillage? Yes.

8399. How have you dealt with those claims for loss and the complaints? With regard to the complaints, we have followed them carefully out to find out why the fruit did not arrive in proper order, and we have found a number of causes contributing to it. From inquiries we made in Sydney and Melbourne, we found that the fruit which comes from Fiji is evidently shipped in better order than the fruit from Queensland. Either the fruit is picked in dry weather or when the dew is not on it.

8400. *By Mr. King:* The bananas in Fiji are shipped by hand, are they not? I do not know myself; I believe it is so.

8401. Up north they are shipped by being slung on board at the end of a rope by means of a steam winch? Usually.

8402. Would not the difference in the mode of shipment more than account for the difference in the condition of the Fiji and Queensland bananas? Not by any means. Mr. Nolan, of Geraldton, on his way south a few months ago, called upon me with strong complaints in regard to the condition in which his bananas were landed at their destination. I invited him to step across to the Eagle street wharf with me

me to where the "Warrego," which had just come from the north, was lying. We inspected a considerable quantity of bananas lying on the wharf discharged from the "Warrego," and found them in excellent condition. On board the "Warrego" we looked down No. 2 hatch and saw a large quantity of bananas lying in the 'tween deck in apparently good order. After some little conversation, Mr. Nolan said to me that if we carried the bananas in the condition in which he saw them on the "Warrego" and on the wharf there would be no reason to complain. I requested him on arrival in Sydney to notice the condition of these bananas and also in Melbourne, if he were there, and tell me on his return what their condition was when actually discharged on the wharf. This he promised to do, but I have not heard from or seen him since. Before leaving, he made what I considered an excellent suggestion: that instead of our slinging the bananas on board a number of bunches at a time and their striking against the ship's side and on the hatchway, we should try the coal-basket system—that we should get half-a-dozen large baskets, capable of holding a dozen bunches; these to be put into the lighter, loaded carefully, hoisted out, and carefully landed in the hold of the coasting steamer. This experiment we are now trying. In comparing the condition of the Queensland bananas landed in the southern ports with those from Fiji, I cannot state that the condition of the former is due entirely to the handling. I think there are one or two causes which, perhaps, are the principal factors in this matter. The first is that the steamers from northern ports, in the summer weather, and all the year through, lie two days at the Brisbane wharf, and two days at the Sydney wharf. This is, so far as I have been able to ascertain, most detrimental to the condition of the bananas. There is great heat while the vessels are lying alongside the wharf, and you do not get the same ventilation when the ship is stationary as when she is moving. Mr. Draper, from Cairns, who was sent on a mission by one of the Cairns newspapers in regard to the banana trade, is now on his way back from the south, and he has promised that he will give us his views very fully in regard to what he ascertains at the southern ports, so that we may adopt all useful suggestions.

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8403. Are you aware that in addition to the objections made against the mode of putting the fruit on board, it is stowed, when on board, in a manner calculated to destroy it, by being piled six or eight feet high on the decks or below deck? There are very few bananas carried on deck now.

8404. Are you aware that they are piled up in that way? Yes, in the same way as in the Fiji trade.

8405. Do you think that the fruit is calculated to carry well when piled up in that way? The Fiji bananas are carried in identically the same way, and we have had no complaints about serious losses.

8406. I have had information, too, on that point, that the fruit is not carried in the same way. Here the bunches of bananas are put in in any way. In Fiji they are stowed with the stalks up? I may be wrong in that. They are placed in tiers. There are no shelves in the ships.

8407. Are you aware that in the New York trade with the West Indies they have movable trays fitted into the steamers for carrying bananas? I was not aware of that.

8408. What amount does the company receive per annum for freight on Queensland grown fruit? I could not tell you that for certain.

8409. We were told at Cairns that the company was receiving £150 a week for freight on bananas? Some weeks I believe that is correct.

8410. Don't you consider that a trade which has under present conditions returned that amount of freight is worth fostering and encouraging? Unquestionably.

8411. Don't you think it would be worth while to adopt some system, by which the steamers could be fitted specially for the carriage of fruit? We fitted two steamers with shelves as an experiment, over a year ago—the "Katoomba" and "Quiraing."

8412. Do you know anything of the results of the experiment—has the fruit been carried better in those steamers? It was not reported to me in that way. The fruit was conveyed very well in those ships, but there was no special report made that it was carried better in those ships than in any other. I could find out and speak a little more decisively on that point.

8413. In addition to the complaints about the carriage of bananas, have you had any complaints about cases of fruit being plundered? Not plundered.

8414. We have seen some letters addressed to the company, in which complaints have been made of cases of fruit being plundered, going both ways? There have been complaints about pilferings.

8415. On one occasion we were assured that out of a shipment of forty cases of oranges, twelve cases arrived empty, and the remainder considerably tampered with. It would appear that this pilfering is continuous; that it is not exceptional, but that every man who ships fruit expects to have it plundered? Unfortunately on all the coasting steamers that is going on. It goes on both amongst the passengers and crew, and although we have detected it from time to time, it has not stopped it. It is painfully general on board ships.

8416. But surely it is the business of the company's officers to stop it? We are doing everything we can to stop it. Whenever we have found persons redhanded, they have been punished. We are never ceasing in our efforts to put a stop to this pillage, which takes place particularly in the north.

8417. What are your freights on fruit from Port Douglas, Cairns, and other northern ports? Is a bunch on bananas.

8418. That is whether they go to Brisbane, Sydney, or Melbourne? Yes.

8419. And for case fruit? From Cooktown as far as Sydney, 20s. per ton of 40 feet.

8420. Is it the case that the company sometimes advertises steamers to sail direct to Melbourne, and on their arrival from the north in Brisbane with a cargo of fruit, the steamers are sent back to the north without going to Melbourne and the fruit is transhipped? The company has advertised direct ships, but it sometimes happens that in carrying out our mail contracts the fruit has to be transferred to a connecting steamer. In order to acquaint shippers in the north with these alterations, we telegraph that the change will be effected, so as to give the option of not shipping by steamers stopping here, and we have had letters from Cairns thanking us for that consideration.

8421. The shippers have to pay freight in advance on all fruit shipped from the northern ports? Invariably so on fruit.

8422. And they have to sign a bill of lading by which the company is not answerable for anything? They accept the usual shipping receipt.

8423. Does not the shipping receipt which they receive relieve the company of all responsibility whatever? It has a very large number of conditions. The goods are carried subject to those conditions. That is customary in all shipping business. Ours is not an exception.

8424. Has

- J. Munro. 8424. Has the company under that bill of lading any responsibility whatever for the safety of the cargo?
A very large responsibility.
- 14 Mar., 1889. 8425. Has not the company declined to be responsible for fruit that was stolen? No case of that kind has come before me.
8426. Have no claims ever been made upon the company for loss by pillage? Yes.
8427. How has the company met them? Very much upon their merits. Any claims that the company consider they are really responsible for have been paid.
8428. Can you mention any growers up north to whom you have ever paid compensation? Personally I cannot, because the claims department is in the hands of my colleague, Mr. Bland, and these matters only come before me when there is anything very special or unusual.
8429. We have not received evidence of any case in which the company has paid claims? We paid a claim the other day to one of the Cairns people.
8430. By Mr. King: Have you had any claims from Swallow and Ariel for fruit shipped about Christmas last? I believe there were claims.
8431. How were those claims dealt with? I cannot say.
8432. Are you aware that owing to the loss that shippers have suffered by the company's steamers in many instances their agents have advised them to stop shipping? No.
8433. Is there not always a watch on deck on the company's steamers? Always. All night.
8434. How is it possible that nearly half a shipment of fruit can be stolen? I have no doubt myself that the crew are the principal thieves. The passengers also help.
8435. Do you suppose that the officers also join in? No.
8436. If they did not how could this systematic plunder continue? We have done our best to stop it, and we are open to receive any suggestions for going to any extent in trying to stop it. We are always learning and trying to improve. It is our interest to stop the pillage, and we are fully alive to the fact that we will lose the trade if we do not.
8437. Is there a wharfage charge in addition to the freight of 1s. a bunch on bananas? Yes; wharfage in Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne.
8438. And at Cairns and Port Douglas? No; there is no wharfage there.
8439. There is at Cairns? It is a local charge out of which we do not get anything. We pay 3d. out of our 1s. for lighterage at Cairns.
8440. With reference to sugar, what rate of freight do you charge for carrying it? It varies according to the port.
8441. Have you a regular scale? Yes.
8442. From Cairns to the south? From Port Douglas and Cairns to Brisbane, 15s. a ton; Sydney, 17s. 6d.; Melbourne, 25s.; and Adelaide, 30s.
8443. Can you explain the reason for the very high charge between Sydney and Melbourne, as compared with the rates between Brisbane and Sydney and Melbourne and Adelaide? These rates fluctuate from season to season. The quantity to Melbourne from Port Douglas and Cairns is small. These rates of course are fixed by the combination of steamship owners—Howard Smith and Co., Huddart, Parker, and Co., the Adelaide Steam Shipping Company, and ourselves all work on a common tariff.
8444. What is the object of making the freight between Sydney and Melbourne so much higher than between Sydney and Brisbane and Melbourne and Adelaide? I cannot give an explanation. These anomalies do creep into shipping business.
8445. Do you have any special agreement with firms or individuals for carrying their produce other than the terms which you apply to the public in general? No; they are all on the same footing.
8446. Have you any special agreement with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company? I think we only carry for them from Mackay.
8447. Have they a special rate for freight? Yes. I must correct myself. The Colonial Sugar Company have a contract. The contract is apparently only for the carriage of the Homebush sugar.
8448. Then the company get some advantage under that contract? I believe they will have some little advantage.
8449. What is the freight on sugar going north, say, from Dungeness to Cooktown? Somewhere about £1 a ton.
8450. What would be the freight from Cairns or Dungeness to London? It would depend very much on the season of the year and the wool freights. It depends upon the supply of cargo offering.
8451. But I suppose you are only too glad to get such a cargo as sugar? Only too pleased to get it. We have carried it from Cleveland Bay to London as low as 20s. a ton.
8452. Do you consider that the North Queensland coast is well lighted and safe for navigation? I have always thought so.
8453. Exceptionally safe? From all I can gather it is exceptionally so.
8454. It might be expected then that freights and insurance would be at all events no higher than they are on more exposed coasts? No.
8455. Have you any acquaintance with the northern districts yourself? I have been at some of the ports but not all, on my way from England.
8456. Do you not consider there is a very large trade to be created there if encouragement is given to the people? We have been believers in the Queensland trade in every way.
8457. Do you not consider it would be worth while for the company to give every advantage to the few people up there now with a view to create a large trade? Yes; and I think that we are doing that as far as it lies in our power.
8458. As manager of the company can you suggest any way by which the time between the northern ports to Sydney and Melbourne can be reduced so as to land fruit in a shorter space of time? It is very difficult to disturb what you may call the regular days of sailing. I have been thinking that the only way to meet the banana trade, if it assumes large dimensions, is by sending a steamer through occasionally direct to Sydney and Melbourne. To meet the requirements of each port individually, where so many delays arise, it would be a most difficult thing to disturb the standing arrangements.
8459. You have a telegraph line all along the coast and can ascertain exactly where the steamers are? Yes.

8460. Is there any necessity for a steamer from the North to stop two days in Brisbane or Sydney? The necessity is obvious at once. The steamer arrives here from the North on Sunday. Her day of sailing, to meet the requirements of Brisbane, is Tuesday. It has been so for years past. We cannot send the steamer away directly without seriously inconveniencing the public of Brisbane. J. Munro.
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8461. Why should the public of Brisbane be inconvenienced when you have your advertisements out to let them know that the steamer leaves at daylight on Monday morning? That would never do. These dates are known everywhere, and working a large business, such as we have, the thing is to have as little disturbance as possible of our regular sailings.

8462. *By the Chairman*: Do you know the time occupied between Fiji and Sydney? About seven days. About the same time as from the North to Melbourne.

8463. And there is no port of call? One steamer goes to New Caledonia.

8464. *By Mr. King*: Do you mean seven days from the North to Melbourne, stopping two days in Brisbane, and two days in Sydney? No; I must correct that. It is nearly fourteen days from Port Douglas to Melbourne.

8465. *By the Chairman*: Do you not think, in view of the very large dimensions the banana and other fruit trade is likely to assume, it would pay your company to arrange for a steamer once a week or once a fortnight to start from Cooktown, Port Douglas, Cairns, and Townsville, so as to meet the small boat from Dungeness and the Johnstone—to leave Townsville and go direct to Sydney, carrying passengers, mails, and fruit only? It all depends upon the quantity offered. We keep a very careful eye on the trade, and if the quantity justified it we would not be backward in putting a steamer on.

8466. Well, the position of the North of Queensland in relation to Sydney and Melbourne stands exactly in the same position as the West Indian Islands do to New York. It paid the company there to have fast-going steamers fitted with racks on which to carry the bananas and all other fruit in such a position that ventilation was secured, and it has now grown into a very large trade entirely through the facilities provided by shipping—so much so that a very large proportion of the people of New York are supplied with all the tropical fruits from the West Indian Islands. Could your company not adopt the same plan? It will come in time. We must put the loss of trade from Mackay, Rockhampton, and Brisbane against what we would get further north.

8467. What I mean is this, that independent of your ordinary line of steamers, in the fruit season, when the bananas and mangoes are most plentiful, would it not pay the company, in order to facilitate the trade and encourage the fruit industry, to run a steamer straight to Sydney and Melbourne? We will do that whenever it begins to pay. If the quantities were equal to what we get by the Fiji steamers the thing would be in a nutshell. We get 23,000 bunches of bananas from Fiji, whilst in the same time we would only get 3,000 or 4,000 from Queensland.

8468. If you would put yourself in communication with the growers and let them know that the company would offer them every facility, then the trade would develop; but it is the uncertainty of the transit that stops the trade. All our inquiries point in that direction—to the necessity of there being swift steamers from the North to Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney. That would develop an industry, the extent and magnitude of which would very rapidly exceed that at Fiji? What I now say to you I say to the people who have come down from the North: we will do all we can to encourage the trade, and when it gets to such dimensions as will justify our running a direct steamer we will run it.

8469. *By Mr. King*: The growers have assured us that the general result of shipping fruit has been to land them in a loss. How can you expect the trade to grow under such circumstances? It is one of those things we can scarcely deal with at present. The steamers have to lie in Brisbane and Sydney for a couple of days at a time, and that is a very trying thing for fruit.

8470. What is the distance that your steamers have to run from Fiji to Sydney? 1,872 miles.

8471. And from Port Douglas to Melbourne? 2,017 miles.

8472. *By Mr. Conley*: Your company carries a great deal on behalf of the plantations both up and down? Yes; we carry very largely.

8473. Can you give us any idea of the amount of trade or tonnage you carry? No.

8474. Do you not keep a record of the number of tons of sugar you carry per annum? Yes.

8475. Can you form any idea of the number of tons of return freights in the shape of stores and horses? It is impossible to keep a record of that. Sugar being one commodity, we can keep a record of that.

8476. Is the sugar industry a very large factor in your trade? Very.

8477. Suppose the sugar industry were to cease, would you be great sufferers? Very great sufferers indeed.

8478. Would it result in the number of boats being decreased in the North? It might.

8479. Would it result in a corresponding rise in freights? The probable result would be that upward rates of freight would materially advance if the sugar industry ceased.

8480. So that all northern consumers would have to pay considerably more for their stores and produce than they do now? Yes. I find that in the season of 1887-8 the total quantity of sugar shipped from all Queensland ports to the south was 45,470 tons. In the season that we are now finishing there have been carried 22,780 tons, or a decrease of nearly 50 per cent. The value of that trade to us in freight, roughly speaking, is 20s. a ton, so that in the season we are now closing we have had a diminution in our freight returns of nearly £22,000 on sugar alone. The carriage of sugar is our backbone in Queensland. We get little else but fruit and sugar.

8481. Is it not a fact that, over and above that, you carry a very large percentage of cargo for the plantations all the way up the northern coast? I have no doubt we do.

8482. You say you charge 1s. a bunch on bananas to Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne. Are you aware that the grower in many cases only gets 1s. to 1s. 3d. a bunch? I have heard that before.

8483. So that you are actually getting as much as the grower who has spent months in maturing his crop? Yes.

8484. Can you not see any way of reducing the freight? No; I do not see that we can. It is the same as the Fiji rate, and all other rates are paid in advance, the same as in Queensland. The distance is about the same, and the work we do is about the same.

8485. From Cairns to Brisbane the distance is much shorter? The rates to the three ports have always been the same for the carriage of fruit. We cannot act individually in this matter.

8486. But

- J. Munro. 8486. But surely it seems a strange thing that a Queensland consumer should have to pay as much as a Melbourne consumer? The only way would be to raise the rates between Melbourne and Sydney.
- 14 Mar., 1889. We want to encourage the trade and enable people to sell their fruit in Sydney and Melbourne. Brisbane takes a small quantity, comparatively speaking.
8487. Is not Mr. Nolan your agent at Geraldton? I believe he is.
8488. Was he making complaints on behalf of himself or others? I believe he made general complaints.
- Burns, Philp, and Co. control all the northern ports, and they appoint their agents. We hold Burns, Philp, and Co. responsible. I take it for granted that the complaints made were general.
8489. Is it not a fact that the shipment of fruit by the "Warrego," of which you spoke, was exceptionally favourable? There was nothing to indicate that. We went down in perfect ignorance of the state in which the bananas were.
8490. Were the bananas on the "Warrego" stood up or piled in heaps? Some in heaps and some in layers.
8491. With regard to the ullage in case fruit, can you give any suggestions for improved cases by which this might be prevented? The cases ought to be made as strong as possible, and, although it is expensive, they should be renewed pretty often. The same cases should not be shipped over and over again.
8492. Do any of the shippers put hoopiron or wire round the cases? I have never seen that.
8493. Don't you think that would be a preventative? I think it would go a long way. It recalls to my mind that, in London, we had a very large fine goods trade from Manchester to Zanzibar, and the packages for one particular firm were always being pilfered. They could not get any satisfaction, so they got iron bound cases and put their own seal in the centre. After that, the packages reached their destination safely, and there were no more complaints.
8494. Are you not responsible for loss on sugar? When we do not deliver the quantities we give receipts for, we pay.
8495. Do you, in justice to the fruit growers, apply the same principle when they ship fruit in cases? I have not heard of claims being refused.
8496. Then you admit you are responsible? I do not admit that.
8497. If you admit the principle as applied to sugar shipped in bags, you can hardly refuse the same privilege to growers of fruit? The conditions are not identical. The sugar is down below and the case fruit is on deck.
8498. But as public carriers surely you should take the responsibility? There are conditions under which we have got to work which create these anomalies.
8499. Do you ever carry private detectives on board? We have carried them.
8500. Have they ever succeeded in getting convictions against pilferers? Not one.
8501. Is it not a fact that the passengers get as much fruit as they can eat, supplied by the ship? Yes.
8502. Then there is no inducement for the passengers to steal? The steerage passengers do.
8503. Are the cases not stowed forward? They are stowed forward and aft.
8504. Can you give us any valid reason why you charge £1 a ton freight between Cairns and Cooktown, whereas you carry at a so much lower rate going south? In Queensland the cost is almost all one way. It is all upward. We have to make our expenses, and the expenses come out of the upward freights.
8505. I am speaking of sugar carried to Cooktown? The quantities are very small.
8506. Would it not materially assist the planter if his sugar was carried at a lower rate? It is a question of demand and supply. If there is a large quantity the price comes down.
8507. You said that the "Quiraing" and "Katoomba" were fitted up to carry fruit—why did you abandon that plan? I do not know that it has been abandoned. The ships have been laid up. The "Katoomba" was too small for the trade.
8508. Is the "Katoomba" laid up now? She is re-commissioned now.
8509. Do you know whether the trays on board the vessels have been abandoned? I could not say.

GEORGE WILKIE GRAY examined :

- G. W. Gray. 8510. *By the Chairman* : You are a member of the firm of Quinlan, Gray, and Co., carrying on business in Brisbane? Yes; and also managing director of the Queensland Sugar Company.
- 14 Mar., 1889. 8511. Your firm has acted as agents for sugar planters in the North? We have.
8512. In the sale of their sugar and in supplying them with the ordinary supplies of plantations? Yes.
8513. How long have you been engaged in the sugar trade with planters? Since the first cane was grown by Mr. T. H. Fitzgerald in Mackay, he being the pioneer there twenty years ago.
8514. In what year did the sugar industry begin to assume large proportions? It was at its height, I think, about seven or eight years since.
8515. What was the price of sugar (the produce of Queensland) in Brisbane at that time? Best sugars were selling then at £35 a ton.
8516. How long did that price continue? It varied from £30 to £35 for ten years.
8517. In what year did you first begin to discover a decline in the price of sugar? The decline began, I think, about five years since.
8518. Has it been a steady or fluctuating decline? A steady decline.
8519. What is the price of the sugar now that previously realised £35 a ton? To-day the same sugar is worth about £26, but a rise of fully £6 a ton has taken place during the last three months. It then stood at £20, but the short crop has given rise to the advance during the last few months.
8520. Do you know whether the sugar trade of Queensland has much influence on the commercial prosperity of Brisbane? I consider it has done more for the commercial interest, including the shipping on our coast, than any other two or three industries in the colony combined, and had the prosperity continued I believe as an export, in money value, it would now have far exceeded the wool producing interest.
8521. Do you think it has afforded any employment to the working population of Brisbane? I do; particularly mechanics. When we first started our plantation, we had the greatest difficulty in procuring mechanics

mechanics for the Johnstone River. In fact to get them we had to pay 20s. a day of eight hours for our blacksmiths, and engineers were receiving from 15s. to 16s. a day. Since then the same men have called upon me, and begged me to take them in as storemen at £2 a week.

G. W. Gray.
14 Mar., 1889.

8522. What effect do you think the closing of the plantations would have upon the working classes of Brisbane, and the commercial class? It is already beginning to be felt very seriously, and if the plantations that talk of closing carry out their intentions it will be very much felt by the working classes, by the foundries, and by the shipping companies on our coast. The improvement in the shipping on our coast has been entirely created by the sugar trade, and if that is snuffed out, as it promises to be, I do not know where they will go to find cargo for the steamers that are running on the coast. The wool all goes direct home now, and without the sugar I think that a lot of the steamers now on the coast will have to be taken off. There will be no employment for them.

8523. Is your firm engaged in the local shipping trade? We have not a penny interest in it in any way.

8524. Therefore your opinion is perfectly disinterested? Quite disinterested. I have no interest in it whatever. I speak knowing the large sums we used to pay ourselves for freight up the coast, and for sugar back, and now our monthly accounts with the same company are not one-tenth of what they were.

8525. *By Mr. King:* What is the rate of commission usually charged for the sale of sugar? It is about 6½ per cent.

8526. That is what is called the "Mackay rate"? Yes.

8527. And that covers everything but interest? Yes.

8528. I suppose you are well acquainted with the rates of freight and insurance on this coast? Yes I am.

8529. Do you consider that the freights and insurance charges are reasonable? I consider the insurance is too high altogether, and has been for years, for the reason that they charge now the same rates by these fine steamers as they formerly did by the old-fashioned worn out boats that were running before the sugar industry assumed such magnitude.

8530. How does the freight on sugar compare with the freight on flour? It compares very favourably, taking it all round.

8531. What is the freight on flour from here to Mackay? I cannot tell you from memory. I may tell you that the upward freight on flour is higher than the back freight. The back freight for sugar we can always arrange at a cheaper rate than upward freight, because the companies depend on the sugar for back freight. I think with the small amount of freight offering now the steamers cannot carry it up at a lower rate. It costs 50s. a ton for our flour to the Johnstone, and we get our sugar back at £1.

8532. You are one of the partners of the Queensland Sugar Company? I am the managing director.

8533. Has the company been paying during the last few years? It has not.

8534. If something is not done for the sugar industry to relieve the present depression what will be the effect on that plantation? It will be closed. In fact I may say it is practically closed now, awaiting the result of this Commission.

8535. Your firm also own the Queensland Distillery? They do.

8536. Is that now working? No; it is not. It would be working if I could get molasses locally.

8537. The reason is that you cannot get a supply of molasses? That is the reason.

8538. Would it pay you to bring your molasses down from the Johnstone? No; it would not.

8539. Do you think it would pay you to take the distillery to the molasses? Well, our company is so disheartened at the big expenditure which has already been incurred on the plantation that they are not inclined to increase it, either for distilling or any other purpose, until at all events there is some guarantee that we will have reliable labour to carry on the estate.

8540. The difference between the excise and Customs duty is sufficient to encourage distillation in the colony? Yes it is, particularly with the present high price of rum.

8541. What price do you suppose you would have to pay for molasses if you had the distillery where it could be obtained? On an average it has cost from 1½d. to 2d. a gallon.

8542. A very large amount of molasses is being thrown on the fields in the North? Yes.

8543. How is it that there are no distilleries working in the North at the present time? I suppose it is for the same reason that I have already given—that the sugar planters are so discouraged with the result of their expenditure that they are disinclined to spend more money.

8544. But they have been actually sending to waste a product which might have assisted to carry them on. At your plantation on the Johnstone River, the molasses would have been of some considerable value if it had been turned into rum? We did not feel inclined to expend any more money, because we have expended up to the present time about £80,000 and the company are disinclined to enter into any fresh industry on the estate, until something definite is done in connection with the industry.

8545. If you could see clearly that it was going to be profitable you would go into it? We should. I have been thinking it over, but with the uncertainty of everything on the estate, I would not recommend the expenditure just now.

8546. *By Mr. Cowley:* Can you tell us what the proportion of up loading is to the sugar made which is brought down? I should say that the downward freights in sugar bear the proportion of three-fourths to one-fourth of up loading, that is after a plantation is established.

8547. That is independent of the supplies from the local towns? Yes; direct from Brisbane.

8548. Have you ever had a vessel in the island trade? We have.

8549. Have you got it now? No.

8550. What caused you to abandon the island trade seeing that you own a plantation? Owing to the Government official who was placed on board. Whenever we had a chance of making a successful voyage something came in the way to spoil the voyage. Our venture in the trade was not a success owing to the class of Government agents supplied by the Government.

8551. Can you offer any suggestions by which the island trade could be improved? Yes. I think that the only way is for the Government to take it in hand and have a depot established at the islands; getting a steamer to go down once a month for the boys and take back returns.

8552. You think that would do away with everything objectionable in the matter of introduction? I think that is the only way to do away with the objections in connection with the kauka trade.

8553. Since you have been engaged for eight years sugar planting on the Johnstone, has the price of kanakas advanced materially? Yes; very materially.

8554. Do

G. W. Gray. 8554. Do you think that is occasioned by the circumstances you have narrated? I do. The private owners of vessels do not care to go into the enterprise and send schooners to the islands, and the trade is confined, I think, to about one man at the present time.

14 Mar., 1889. 8555. From your knowledge of the island trade do you think that if the Government took the matter into their own hands the cost of introduction could be very considerably reduced? I am sure it could, particularly if the agreements were for five instead of three years. My experience is that for the first year you have the boys they are frequently in the hospital and you get very little good out of them. Practically it is a two years' engagement. If the cost of bringing over the boys was spread over five years instead of three the general expense would be considerably lessened.

8556. Then you think if the Government introduced the labour, and the term of agreement was extended to five years, it would be a material assistance to the planter? It would.

8557. Is there any other suggestion you can make by which you think the planters would be materially benefited? My experience in connection with our own plantation is that without coloured labour it will be impossible to carry on. The field work cannot be done by white men. I am sure of that, because the heat is so intense at the Johnstone when they are cutting cane. White labour has been tried. White men have been sent up there but they will not remain.

8558. There is nothing else you can suggest by which you think the position of the planters can be improved? No, unless some arrangement could be made to bring Javanese down. I have had no experience with them myself, but at the adjoining estate of Mourilyan I think they have worked very well.

8559. You prefer the kanakas? Yes, if their introduction can be arranged in the way I suggest. Last season, for instance, it was a regular scramble to get men to take off the cane. We had Chinamen, lascars, and all sorts of men, and then we could not get enough off to keep the mill going.

8560. You would employ none of those men provided you could get kanakas? I would not, but without the assistance of Chinamen hitherto we would have had the mills closed long since on the Johnstone. If we could get kanakas, and be able to depend upon having sufficient of them, under the five years' agreement, I think that might meet the difficulty.

8561. And that would do away with the necessity of employing Chinese? It would.

JAMES SIMON MICHAEL examined:

J. S. Michael. 8562. *By the Chairman*: You are in the Railway Department, Brisbane? Yes.

14 Mar., 1889. 8563. We understand you have had experience in tea growing? Yes; in Cachar in Bengal. I had about 1,100 acres under plant there, and about 6,000 acres altogether.

8564. Are you of opinion that the climate of Northern Queensland is analogous to that where you were cultivating the tea plant? I think some parts of it must be. Wherever you have a rainfall of, say, 120 to 150 inches in the year, with a tropical heat such as they have in the North, it is certain to be suitable for the growth of tea; but the longer the period of time over which the rainfall is distributed, the more suitable it would be for tea. What I mean to say is, that if you have a rainfall of 150 inches in the year and it is distributed over eight months of the twelve, you can go on manufacturing for those eight months, but if the rainfall is for only four months out of the twelve, then a great part of the year would be lost. Bushes will only flush during the time of heavy rain accompanied by excessive heat. I have never been up North and am not aware how long the rains last.

8565. What labour is employed in the growth of the tea plant? Men, women, and children.

8566. Families? Yes; it is entirely black labour, of course.

8567. What wages are paid to those engaged in the industry? Men are paid at the rate of five rupees a month, a rupee being worth 1s. 6d. Women four rupees a month, and children in proportion to the women, according to their size.

8568. With rations? No; they provide everything themselves.

8569. What is the average yield per acre? The average yield would depend upon the age of the garden and the age of the plant. In five or six years the plant is supposed to be in full bearing, and when a garden is a success, being well planted with a good quality of tea, it ought to give at least 400 lb. of tea to the acre.

8570. Then it would require a person of some considerable experience and knowledge to commence tea planting? It would require at any rate the manager to have a knowledge of it. Of course it might be possible for a man without knowledge to grow tea, but it would not be advisable for him to do it.

8571. Then how long after the tea plant is planted in the ground ought the grower to expect to realise on his crop? In the third year after the seed is placed in the ground he begins to realise. After the third year he goes on recouping himself for capital expended, and probably, with success, he ought to recoup his capital by about the sixth or seventh year. Of course a great deal depends upon the seasons and the rainfall.

8572. Not having been north, you do not know what particular districts would be suitable for the growth of the tea plant? From what I have heard I think the Mourilyan Harbour, the Cairns district, and the Johnstone, would in all probability be suitable. Almost any soil is suitable, provided it has an admixture of iron in it. A feruginous loam would be very suitable; then the black loams are suitable, and some of the most successful tea I ever planted was grown in a swamp that I drained. It was lying between two ranges of hills. I cut down a jungle over this and drained it, and it was simply solid peat. That turned out to be the most successful planting I ever had.

8573. Do you think it would pay to grow tea in Queensland with European labour? No; I do not.

8574. Not on the family principle, as in Bengal? I do not think so. You could not afford to pay European labour. It would be an utter impossibility.

8575. What price does the grower obtain for his tea? I suppose the average just now would be about twelve annas—that is about 1s. 6d. a lb. If he did not get an average of twelve annas it would be a very bad look out.

8576. That would be equal to £30 an acre? Yes; an anna is worth 1½d. There are about 200,000,000 lb. of tea manufactured in China annually; in India 40,000,000 or 50,000,000; and the Indian tea goes to make up the quality of the China tea. The Indian tea makes the China tea more valuable and brings up its market value.

RICHARD

RICHARD ILIFF examined :

8577. *By Mr. King* : What are you ? Accountant to the firm of Smith, Forrester, and Company, ironfounders and engineers.
 8578. Have you been long in that office ? About four years.
 8579. The firm was formerly R. R. Smellie and Company ? Yes.
 8580. Had you anything to do with the firm whilst they were carrying on the business ? No.
 8581. Have you had much work in supplying machinery or doing work for the sugar plantations ? We were very busy between the years 1882 and 1884.
 8582. What was the value of the work you had in that time ? It would run into about £33,000.
 8583. Since then what work has been done ? Since then there has been a lull.
 8584. Can you say what was the amount of work of that description you did in 1888 ? In this colony, nothing.
 8585. Is the establishment working full-handed ? Not as full as we were in 1882-1884.
 8586. If you had the same demand for machinery as there was in 1882-1884, you would be able to employ more hands ? Certainly.
 8587. What wages are given to the men in the foundry generally. From 10d. to 20d. an hour, according to the class of work.
 8588. Is the firm in a position to turn out machinery for sugar planters if they were required to do so ? Yes ; to any extent.
 8589. They have already had experience in that class of work ? They turned out a large number of plants during the time the rush was on—about twelve full plants, besides supplying parts to other people who had a portion only of their machinery.
 8590. You consider the sugar-planting industry is of some importance to the iron industry ? It was of great value during the time the rush lasted. Of course there were the repairs also, which brought in a large amount of work.

R. Iliff.
 14 Mar., 1889.

FRIDAY, 15 MARCH, 1889.

BRISBANE DISTRICT.

(At the Rosewood Scrub.)

PRESENT :

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KINCH, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

THOMAS LAURENCE SMITH examined :

8591. *By the Chairman* : What is the name of your plantation ? We call it Woodlands.
 8592. What experience have you had in sugar growing ? The only experience that I have had has been my own, and that has covered a period of seven to eight years.
 8593. How many acres do you hold altogether ? About 1,200.
 8594. How many acres have you under sugar cane ? We have never measured it up, but I should think approximately about 250 acres under cane.
 8595. What amount of sugar did you obtain from last year's crushing ? Last year we did not crush at all.
 8596. What was the cause of that ? The dry weather. The cane had not grown sufficiently to make it worth while cutting it.
 8597. Have you a stand over crop for the next season ? Yes.
 8598. What sort of prospect have you for a crop next season ? It is somewhat about the same. In fact, it is a little worse, because the cane has not moved, and much of the cane that was good and sound last year is rotten this year. There has not been sufficient moisture to enable the plants to live.
 8599. How long has the drought continued in this district ? More or less since 1877, but two years ago we had a good deal of rain in January. That might be called a wet season. Since then it has been dry. You might say a continued drought for the past two years.
 8600. In which all parties have suffered alike ? Pretty well. The maize crop in the district was a failure last year, and this season it is worse. There will hardly be a pumpkin, to say nothing of maize.
 8601. What amount of capital have you invested, both in the mill and the land ? That is more than I could tell you. I have had so many things mixed up that I could not say.
 8602. Can you give the approximate amount ? It would only be approximate. As nearly as I can come to it, for the mill, the distillery, planting cane, and fencing the land, it has cost from £20,000 to £25,000.
 8603. Have you ever obtained interest on that amount of capital ? Nothing like it. We do not expect to for some time to come.
 8604. What amount of sugar did you make in 1887 ? We made between 260 and 270 tons, and about 1,300 gallons of rum, but at that time we had not so much cane under crop as we have now.
 8605. When you do have a crushing, you utilise the whole of your molasses ? Yes ; turn it into rum.
 8606. Have you a good market for the rum ? We have no difficulty in selling it. I could have sold twice as much if we had had it to sell. The price we get is very low certainly, but still there is plenty of sale for the rum.
 8607. What labour do you employ in working the plantation ? Niggers.
 8608. That is kanakas ? Yes.
 8609. How many of them have you ? We have about thirty-six now. Of course there is very little work for them to do now. Besides, a lot of the boys' time has just expired and they have gone away—some of them only yesterday. We have thirty-six left now.

T. L. Smith.
 15 Mar., 1889.

8610. When

T. L. Smith. 8610. When you are in full working order and have cane to crush, as in the season of 1887, what is the average number of men employed by you? The number of men would be, I think, about 120, including those engaged in cutting cane, working the mill, carting, and so forth.

15 Mar., 1889. 8611. Do you experience any difficulty in getting white labour when you need it? You can get the labour right enough, but it is no use when you do get it. You can get any number of men, such as they are, but they will not do the work. I tried to work with white labour at first, but it was nogo. I got the men and started work, but as soon as we got to the crushing season they struck. I gave them more money and then they were not satisfied. The first pay day half of them would be in the public-house drunk, and you would have to start without them. In fact the only season when we cut cane with white labour alone it cost 6s. a ton to cut and load it.

8612. Do any of the farmers grow cane for you? One or two of them are growing cane here and there, but the whole of it put together would not amount to more than ten or fifteen acres. Sometimes they bring it into the mill and sometimes they do not.

8613. What price do you give for the cane? From 8s. 6d. to 14s. a ton, according to the price of sugar at the time.

8614. Have you ever made overtures to them to grow cane for the mill under contract? Not under contract. The mill was put up as a central mill. We put up the mill before we planted any cane ourselves. That is why we are so far behind with the quantity under cultivation. The farmers promised that if the mill was put up they would all grow cane. We did not enter into any contract, but I said I would put up the mill if they would grow the cane. When I put the mill up there was not more than fifty acres of land under cane, and I had to begin planting myself. We are still open to purchase cane at current rates from any farmers who grow it, but they do not grow it.

8615. Do they find maize growing more profitable? Well, I suppose so. They have obtained a very good price for the maize during the last few years. It has averaged 3s. or 3s. 6d. a bushel. If they get another very good season maize will be so plentiful that they will get a very small price for it, and then, perhaps, a good many of them may grow cane. I have bought maize here at 1s. 4d. a bushel, delivered, and that time will come again. In fact, I think myself that a good season will mean a bad one for the maize growers. They will get little or nothing for their crop.

8616. When you were in full working order as in 1887, what was your average annual expenditure? In wages I should think from £2,000 to £3,000, taking the cultivation of the cane throughout the year, the working of the mill, and so forth.

8617. What wages do you pay your kanakas? £15 a year and their clothes and rations, medical attendance, and other things.

8618. Do you import them direct? No; they are time-expired boys. I find it very much easier to get them than to indent boys, and they are much better. You pay them a larger wage, but they are better workers. I should not try to import any while I could get the time-expired boys. Being so near Brisbane, where they congregate, we have a good chance of getting them.

8619. If the seasons were favourable, do you think this district is adapted for sugar cane growing? Yes; I do not think it could be beaten, judging from the cane I have seen here. We have had canes here 10 feet or 12 feet long. The canes have grown up first, fallen down, and grown up again and fallen down again in one season. The only thing I think is against cane growing is the deficient rainfall. If we get an ordinary rainfall, we get a fair crop, but if we get a regular wet season we have cane in abundance, more especially if we get the rain before the end of December.

8620. You do not think the frosts would have an injurious effect on the crops? We have not felt them yet. Of course we plant on the high land, which is free from the frost, but if the cane was planted on the low land, it would be frost bitten.

8621. By Mr. King: You said that white men were not a success in the field—did they object to any particular part of the work? They were always grumbling and saying they did not care about doing this or that, and if you wanted them to do a little extra work after hours, they would simply flatly refuse.

8622. What description of work did the object to most? Cane cutting and loading and working about the mill. They are in the habit of saying "It is only a kanaka's job, and I will see you damned before I do it; do it yourself."

8623. Do you trash your cane? No.

8624. Did the white men object to weeding and hoeing? That seemed to be the job they would not do. I put a lot of men into the field and they would chop the tops off the weeds, and never hoe them out properly. I refer to such men as are available—the new chuns. Other men who are any good soon get farms of their own; but the object of the majority is to simply pass their time as quickly as possible—they never mind the work so long as the sun goes down.

8625. The year before last when you had a good crop you cultivated with kanakas? Yes.

8626. You had some white men employed? Yes; we had some about the mill, and an overseer in the field.

8627. About how many white men did you employ at that time? In the field we would have a white man to about every dozen darkies, and the horse drivers would be mostly whites. Here and there we have an extra intelligent boy that we put on to drive. About the mill we should have darkies at the cane carriers, and one or two at the clarifiers.

8628. How many white men would you give employment to if you were in full work? At crushing time from twenty to twenty-five white men.

8629. In the field and in the mill? Yes.

8630. What wages do you give the white men? The ordinary labourers' wages, 4s. a day.

8631. And rations? No; without rations; and the overseers 5s. a day.

8632. You find them lodging I suppose? Yes; and they find their own rations. They have no difficulty in getting their own rations here, at the stores and groceries, and I find the men like it better than if supplied with rations. It would be cheaper to me to give them rations, but they would not be so well pleased.

8633. If you were unable to get any kanakas what would be the effect on your plantation? It is hard to tell; I think there would not be a plantation here very soon after. I do not see how there could be.

I do

I do not see how it could possibly be carried on with such white labour as is available. You want these T. L. Smith. men only for a given time and you have to take on new men every season. You have to teach all these men their work, and after they have thoroughly learned the work there is no more work for them. That 15 Mar., 1889, has to be repeated every season. Then as to the cultivation I do not think we could get the ordinary labourer to do that work at all, to say nothing about doing it satisfactorily.

8634. Would it pay you to do your cultivation with white labour supposing the white men would work as well as the kanakas? Not at present; but in after years I think it might. At present we have to cultivate largely amongst the stumps, and the whole of the labour is done by hand, but in the course of time when the stumps rot and we get the land under plough, then it can be worked with horses. Then I think we could do the cultivation without kanakas, because one man with horses would do as much as a dozen by hand.

8635. Can you tell us the cost of your mill? I am sure I could not. I do not know the cost of erection, and I have never bothered about keeping separate books of account.

8636. What was the first cost of the machinery? I should have to hunt up all my invoices to tell you that.

8637. Where did you get your machinery? The greater part of it came from home. The evaporating plant from Mirrlees, Watson, and Co.; the crushing plant from Fletcher Manlove; part of the boilers were manufactured in England and part in the colony. The charcoal plant came from home.

8638. Where was the plant that was made in the colony manufactured? The boilers were made by Smith, Forrester, and Co.

8639. Do you give employment to any mechanics in overhauling and repairing the machinery? Yes; we generally have two or three before our crushing, and when we are not crushing we keep one. There are always repairs about the mill that will keep one man employed throughout—I refer to fitters; and then we have carpenters, blacksmiths, and bricklayers.

8640. Do you work many horses on the plantation? I should think about fourteen or fifteen.

8641. Do you grow the feed for them? Yes; we try to. I am afraid that this year we will not succeed.

8642. When you started this plantation what was the price of sugar? What we would call a low ration sugar now was worth £22 a ton. That same sugar would fetch about £12 now.

8643. Then there has been a fall of about £10 a ton? Yes; fully £10. When we began we just put up the open pans and the fire battery, and made the ordinary open pan sugar, which is about equal to the ordinary ration sugar, and £22 a ton is what we got for the sugar we made. Now we send out refined sugar, and only get £15 a ton for it.

8644. Was there any reason why the farmers of this district did not grow the cane after they had promised you? No; I do not know of any reason, except that cartage was a little heavy; but they knew what that would be before they commenced. The country is not level, and the cost of cartage was a drawback. Still most of the men have their own waggons, and the cost would be reduced to the lowest point. I think the main reason was that they have had a good market for maize of late years, and have been able to make more out of it.

8645. Had they any dispute with you as to the price of cane? No.

8646. And you think cultivation of sugar cane by the farmers has diminished instead of increased? Yes; you may say it has been abandoned altogether.

8647. They do not talk of going into it? No. Of course when I saw that they did not go into it as they promised, I began to put in cane myself.

8648. Does not the sugar cane stand drought better than maize? Yes; a great deal better.

8649. Do you not think that the sugar cane is a more profitable crop than maize in a climate such as this? It would depend upon the output of maize. If the market was flooded with maize, then the sugar would be better; but if there was a scarcity of maize, and it commanded such a price as it has done, then perhaps sugar cane growing would not be better than maize growing.

8650. What is the average crop of maize per acre in this district? It varies very much. I have heard some people say that they have got as much as 100 bushels to the acre, and I have known them to get only 5 bushels. About 30 bushels to the acre would be a fair average.

8651. Four shillings a bushel is a good price? Yes; very good.

8652. That would be about £6 an acre? Yes.

8653. Do they get two crops off the same land in the year? Not very often. If a man gets a crop in very early, he will put in a second one between it; but in that case he will only have two very light crops, and not so much in the aggregate as one good one. As a rule, they only take off one crop.

8654. What do you consider a fair crop of cane per acre in this district? I think if we get a fair season we ought to get from 25 to 30 tons of cane to the acre.

8655. What price would you give for that? We would give at present 8s. or 8s. 6d. a ton delivered at the mill.

8656. At that rate the farmer would get more money for an acre of cane than for an acre of maize? Yes.

8657. Is it more expensive to work cane than maize? It is more expensive to plant it in the first instance, but after that it is cheaper. With maize they plough each time they plant, but with sugar cane it is put in this year and the same crop does for three or four years, and sometimes five years. Taking it on an average, cane cultivation is somewhat cheaper than maize cultivation.

8658. What do you reckon the carting of the cane to the mill would cost? It would depend upon where the farm was. It costs me to cart it out of my own field, one and a half-miles from the mill, from 1s. to 1s. 3d. a ton.

8659. By Mr. Cowley: You say you have had a drought for two years—how much rain has fallen? The record is: 1885, 27.30 inches; 1886, 33.03 inches; 1887, 54.66 inches; 1888, 23.88 inches; and up to the end of February in this year, 27.5 inches.

8660. When you made the 250 tons of sugar, what area of cane did you crush that year? About 120 acres all told.

8661. What is the proportion of black labour to white that you generally use? When we are working, I reckon it will be about 100 darkies and from twenty to twenty-five whites.

8662. By the Chairman: What would be the cost of carting, supposing the cane was grown two or three or four miles round the mill? It would depend upon how a man was situated. If he had a waggon and horses of his own it should not greatly exceed what it costs me to bring it in. The great cost is in the teams waiting for loading and unloading.

8663. Of the

- T. L. Smith. 8663. Of course the natural features of the country here are hilly? Yes.
8664. The cost of cartage would be more expensive than if the ground was level? Yes; of course. You cannot cart so much at a time. The horses instead of taking $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons would go along with 1 ton.
- 15 Mar., 1889. 8665. Do you think that that has had a detrimental effect upon the growing of cane? I do not think so. It is one of the causes which have prevented cane from being grown; but this last season we have laid down a tramway through our estate. That will extend one and a-half miles from the mill, and I should be willing to give the farmers the same price delivered at the end of the tramway as I should give them at the rollers.
8666. Have you made that fact generally known? No; I have not. I have not bothered about the farmers in any way.
8667. What quantity of sugar is your machinery capable of making? It is supposed to be up to 5 tons of sugar per day, but I think it is rather less—about 4 tons.
8668. How many working days do you consider the season lasts? The last time we worked exactly six months. We began crushing on the shortest day in the year, and finished on the longest. After that we had a month's work in the mill besides—finishing off the sugars.
8669. In view of being able to utilise all your molasses and sell all your rum, would it not be to your advantage to encourage the farmers to grow cane? Yes; but they are such a peculiar class I could not persuade them. If I was a German I might succeed.
8670. They are not able to see their own interests, because they can make £12 an acre by growing cane and only £6 an acre by growing maize? I have shown them that, but it is of no avail. They do not believe me.

MONDAY, 18 MARCH, 1889.

BRISBANE DISTRICT.
(At Mount Cotton.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.
A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

HENRY HEINEMANN examined:

- H. 8671. *By the Chairman:* You are a son of H. Heinemann? Yes.
- Heinemann. 8672. He is the owner of Mount Cotton Plantation? Yes.
- 18 Mar., 1889. 8673. How many acres have you here altogether? Under cane?
8674. No, altogether? Altogether about 1,200 acres, I think.
8675. How many acres have you under cane? One hundred and fifty.
8676. How many acres did you crush last season? Of our own cane?
8677. Yes? About thirty acres.
8678. Only thirty acres? Yes.
8679. How many acres did you crush for others? I could not tell you; I could tell you the tonnage.
8680. How many tons of cane? 2,400 tons were crushed last season.
8681. How many tons of cane came from your own plantation? 600 tons.
8682. Did you purchase the cane from the surrounding farmers? Yes.
8683. What price did you give them for it? 3s. a ton delivered at the mill.
8684. How many tons of sugar did you turn out? 190 tons.
8685. Was that the entire output of sugar from the 2,400 tons of cane? Yes.
8686. How much capital have you invested in the whole plantation? £5,000.
8687. How much have you spent on it? About £2,500.
8688. You have laid out no more than £2,500? No.
8689. What did your mill cost? Well, you see a lot of alterations have been made; we had an open pan at first, now we have put up a vacuum pan.
8690. Can you tell us approximately what has been the cost of the mill? £2,500.
8691. Then what capital do you consider is represented in the entire plantation, including the mill? How much money have you spent in clearing, cultivation, fencing, buildings, &c., all over the plantation since you first got it? What do you consider the capital account of the plantation? I do not think I could tell you.
8692. What were your working expenses for last year? £1,950. That is as near as I can get it.
8693. What were the profits of the plantation last year? £3,053. From that has to be deducted £1,950 for working expenses, and the balance—namely, £1,103, was the profit.
8694. Do you grow anything else on the plantation besides sugar? We do; that is we do not grow anything else ourselves; the other land is leased.
8695. To whom? Chinese.
8696. What rent do they pay you per acre? I do not know exactly how many acres there are, but I think about 40 acres.
8697. What rent do they pay you for the 40 acres? £200 a year.
8698. What do they grow? Bananas. We planted the land and then handed it over to them.
8699. What labour do you employ to grow your sugar cane? White and black.
8700. How many kanakas have you? We have not many at present, but last year we had thirty.
8701. How many have you now? About eight. We will pay them off within a week or so, but we will increase them again at crushing time.
8702. What wages do you pay these boys? £19 a year, and some £20.
8703. Are

8703. Are they time-expired boys or indented to you? They are agreement boys. We did not get them from the islands direct.
8704. How many white men do you employ? About six.
8705. What wages did you pay them? That all depends. Some of them—engineers—£2 10s a week, others 30s. a week.
8706. Did you employ any white men at all in field work in connection with the cane? No; that work is all done by kanakas. Of course we have ploughmen.
8707. What wages do you pay your ploughmen? From 18s. a week and tucker up to 30s. a week.
8708. *By Mr. Cowley*: Not ploughmen? Yes; 30s. a week and he finds himself.
8709. *By the Chairman*: Could you grow sugar cane here with white labour only? Yes, I think so.
8710. And why do you not employ white men in preference to kanakas? Those are right enough. I would not employ any other coloured labour than kanakas. I would not employ Indian coolies.
8711. You say that you could grow sugar cane with white labour. Well, I want to know why you donot employ white labour. You being a German, why do you not employ your own countrymen? If you can get them cheap, it is right enough. But according to the Act there are no more South Sea's coming here after next year, and if coolies come in I would rather take white men and make a little less than take them.
8712. Then it is not because the white man cannot do the work, but it is the question of cheapness that makes you employ the kanaka? Yes; the white men can do the work, but some of them won't.
8713. How long have you been growing cane here? Ten years.
8714. And have you always made a good profit out of it? Yes; we cannot make such a good profit now as we used to, because sugar is down in price.
8715. But you have made good profits, much larger than you are making now? Yes.
8716. Have you any interest to pay on borrowed capital? No.
8717. Is the plantation entirely free of debt? Yes.
8718. *By Mr. King*: If you had to cultivate your cane with white men, paying them the same wages as you have just mentioned, instead of kanakas, could you then make it pay? You would not make such a big profit.
8719. What price did you get for your sugar last year, net? About £15 on an average, delivered in Brisbane.
8720. And it cost something to get it to Brisbane? Yes; 10s. a ton.
8721. So that would be £14 10s. net? Yes.
8722. Have you to pay any commission on the sale of the sugar? Yes.
8723. How much would that come to? I could not say.
8724. Then the net price of sugar would be a little over £14 a ton? Yes; about that.
8725. What was the total amount of your expenses last year? £1,950.
8726. Does that include everything—the kanakas' wages, the white men's wages, and the cutting of the cane? Yes; it includes all the expenses for the year.
8727. The mill expenses? Yes.
8728. Firewood? Yes; and the firewood in hand.
8729. Do you and any of your family work at the mill? Yes; I work there myself.
8730. Does your father work there? He might see that everything was going on all right, but he does not work.
8731. Do any of the family work? No.
8732. Do you allow anything for your wages?—Are your wages included in the £1,950? Yes; all wages are included in it.
8733. You say that your working expenses are £1,950; but you have to buy 1,800 tons of cane at 9s. a ton? No; I do not. We bought 1,100 tons for £530, and we bought 700 tons at 2s. a ton, which makes a difference.
8734. That would be £70? Yes.
8735. You paid £600 for the purchase of cane? Yes.
8736. That, added to the £1,950 working expenses, makes £2,550 altogether. Then you made 190 tons of sugar, and the net price you got for that was about £14 a ton—that is £2,660, leaving a profit of £110. Do you consider that £110 good interest on the money you have invested in the plantation? The £1,950 expenses included the cost of the cane, and everything.
8737. Is the cultivation of sugar cane increasing in this district? I could not say. The thing is going back round about here.
8738. Is as much sugar cane grown here now as there used to be six or seven years ago? No; not by a long way.
8739. Were there any more mills in the district six or seven years ago besides this one? Yes; three besides this.
8740. Are they working still? No; they are closed.
8741. How do you account for that?—If sugar cane is so profitable, how is there not an increase instead of a decrease? Bad management has a lot to do with it.
8742. How many kanakas do you say you had last year? Thirty.
8743. Did you have them for the whole year? Yes.
8744. What wages did you pay them? £19.
8745. What wages did you pay the whitemen during the year? £507, I think.
8746. And you say that, after paying all expenses, you had £1,105 to the good? Yes.
8747. When you say that, you mean that you had £1,105 more at the end of the year than you had at the beginning? Yes.
8748. That is equal to considerably over £5 a ton profit on the sugar made? Yes.
8749. Then you must have made your sugar for less than £9 a ton, that is including working expenses and purchasing the cane? Yes.
8750. *By Mr. Cowley*: Were the thirty acres that you crushed of your own stand-over cane? All two years' old cane.
8751. Then should not a certain percentage of the working expenses of the previous year be charged to this? I do not know.
8752. You

H.
Heinemann.
18 Mar., 1889.

- H. 8752. You had two years' cultivation? No; only one year. We do all our cultivation the first year, and then do nothing else.
- Heinemann. 8753. Do you not trash the cane? Only the first year; we never trash it after that.
- 18 Mar., 1889. 8754. Never? No; never.
8755. You say that you bought cane at 2s. a ton. Did you cut and cart it yourself? Yes.
8756. How far away was it? About a mile.
8757. You say you paid white ploughmen 18s. a week and rations, and 30s. a week without rations. Is that a fair average price? Yes.
8758. Do you never get them for less? No; I would not like to offer any man less.
8759. Well, paying these wages to these men, do you think that if you had no kanakas at all, and had to replace them with white men, you could make it pay? I would not make it pay so well.
8760. Would you make it pay at all?—Can you form an opinion from your ten years' experience? We would not make much profit, I think.
8761. How many days did your mill work? I cannot say.
8762. What number of men did you employ in the mill when you were at work? About ten or twelve.
8763. All white men? No.
8764. How many white men did you employ? A sugar-boiler and two engineers—one at £2 a week and one at £2 10s. The latter is not stationary, while the other engineer is always here.
8765. How many days were they employed? I cannot say.
8766. What do your rations cost you per head per week for the blacks? I do not know.
8767. You can form an opinion, surely? It would not come to much over 6s.
8768. Does that include clothes and tobacco? We have nothing to do with clothes.
8769. But you must have to furnish them with clothes and tobacco if they are under agreement? No.
8770. Does the Polynesian inspector come out here? Yes.
8771. And does he not compel you to give them clothes? No.
8772. What is the Polynesian inspector's name? Taylor.
8773. Are those boys ticket men? No.
8774. And you do not give them any clothes or tobacco? No. If we agree to give these men so much money a year, and they agree to keep themselves in clothes, what has anybody to do with it?
8775. Do you pay the return passage of the men? Yes; if they go home. But most of them leave the district, and engage elsewhere. Most of them have been employed before.
8776. But have you not to pay the previous employer if you do not send them home? Yes.
8777. Can you tell us the cost of the rations supplied to the white men?—How much is a white man's ration per week? I do not think there would be much difference between it and the black boys'. About 6s. per week. The kanakas are used as well here as any of the white men.
8778. I only want to know the cost? Six shillings per head per week all round. I could not do it if there were only one or two.
8779. What is the average number of white men engaged on the plantation all the year? During the crushing season there are sometimes more and sometimes less.
8780. The average number? We have only six all the year round.
8781. Do you weigh all the cane that comes to the mill, both your own and that which you purchase from others? Yes.
8782. You have not a double crusher? No, only a single crusher.
8783. How many tons of cane does it take to make a ton of sugar? Somewhere from 12 to 13 tons.
8784. And is that done by a single crusher? Yes.
8785. When you say that your returns were £2,660 for the year, does that include fruit or anything besides sugar? No.
8786. Does it not include the rent paid by the Chinamen? No.
8787. Nothing but the actual net returns for the year? No.
8788. After having paid for cartage, and commission on the sale of sugar, that is the net return? Yes; I do all my own cartage, and it is included in the working expenses.
8789. How many horses do you employ? About nine.
8790. Have you debited the cost of these horses? No.
8791. How do you feed them? On corn.
8792. Do you grow it yourself? No; I have to buy it.
8793. Is that included in the £1,950? Yes.
8794. Then the £1,950 covers all your expenses, and your own wages and rations as well? I do not include my wages. I get part of the profit. My wages are not included in the £1,950.
8795. Is there anyone else whose wages are not included in the £1,950? No; except father's.
8796. Is he the manager? Yes, he is the manager. I have the management of the mill.
8797. Then your wages and your father's have to come out of the profits? Yes.
8798. You say that you make a gross profit of £1,105 after paying the men's wages, the return passage money, rations, cartage, and all expenses? Yes.
8799. By Mr. King: You say that you had thirty kanakas employed during the year at £19 a year; that is £570 you paid for kanakas' wages? Yes.
8800. The wages you paid the white men amount to £507? Yes.
8801. The kanakas' rations were 6s. a week each, that would be £9 per week, or £468 a year. That is altogether £570 for kanakas' wages, £168 for their rations, and £507 for white men's wages, making a total of £1,545, to which has to be added £600 for the purchase of cane, making a grand total of £2,145 for expenses for one year? (No answer.)
8802. By Mr. Cawley: Did you pay the passage money of the kanakas? I paid some of it, but many of them have gone away from me.
8803. By Mr. King: How much had you to pay on account of return passages for kanakas? We did not pay much last year.
8804. And your own wages were not included in the £2,145 mentioned? (No answer.)
8805. By the Chairman: How is it that you came to pay such a low price as 2s. a ton for cane? That was because the plantation you passed turned insolvent, and they did not know what to do with the cane. Potts had the cane. We took it as cheap as we could get it. It was not farmers' cane, as farmers could not grow it and sell it for 2s. a ton. That is where the profit comes in out of the cane.

8806. Then that assisted to increase the profits of last year? Yes. We have gone as high as 16s. 6d. a ton for cane. That was eight years ago.
8807. Are these farmers from whom you got the cane at 9s. satisfied to grow it at that price? Yes.
8808. And to still go on growing cane? Yes.
8809. Do they grow it with their own labour? No, they have South Sea Islanders.
8810. When you were paying 16s. 6d. a ton for cane what were you getting for your sugar? £29.
8811. Then you could afford to pay 16s. 6d.? Yes; just as well as getting £11 a ton for sugar and paying 9s. for cane. Sugar is too cheap now.
8812. You know that the importation of kanakas ceases at the end of 1890. What is going to be the effect of that with you? Well, I will work as much as I can and then I will shut up. I could not go on without them.
8813. Then you will close your mill if the Act is put in force? Yes; I believe in the South Sea's, but not in any other coloured labour. We have tried several of the other, but they are no good.
8814. *By Mr. Cowley*: Then you have no other source of income as far as this account is concerned? No.
8815. Have you sold all your sugar this season? Yes.
8816. *By the Chairman*: Does your sugar land show any signs of exhaustion? Yes; but only on account of the drought.
8817. Supposing you were to abandon sugar cane and convert your land into other crops would they be as profitable as the sugar? I do not think that any other crop excepting fruit would be as profitable. Bananas do very well with us.
8818. When you say you would close the mill you do not mean that you would abandon the plantation altogether?—Or would you devote your land to some other sort of production? Yes.
8819. Is there any church or chapel in the place where the kanakas go to get religious instruction? No.
8820. Do any ministers or missionaries visit them at all? No.
8821. Do they go to any schools in the evenings? No.
8822. Would you not prefer to have your own countrymen to work here in place of kanakas? No.
8823. Why? They do not like to do a day's work. You might get a man once in a way who did.
8824. But your own countrymen are noted for doing a good day's work? Perhaps; but a good man can always get work. It is only those who cannot get a job anywhere else who come about a plantation. They work a day or two and then knock off. If they earn £1 and get it, and if there is a grog shanty near they leave their work. You can't depend on white labour. You can depend on the South Seas, and I prefer them for their steadiness.
8825. *By Mr. King*: Do the kanakas get grog here and get into trouble? Yes.
8826. Do the police try to stop people selling grog to them—do they try to check it? Yes; a man named Katz got fined the other day.
8827. *By the Chairman*: Do you know that Chinamen are expert hands at supplying kanakas with grog? No; I do not.
8828. *By Mr. King*: Could you suggest anything by which the sugar industry could be improved? Is there anything the Government could do to assist the production of sugar and make the industry more permanent? I do not know. Put on a duty, I suppose.
8829. There is a duty on it? If the bounty was taken off the beetroot sugar it would help us. The supply is too much for the consumption.
8830. *By Mr. Cowley*: Do you make white sugar? No, no white.
8831. Can you tell us the proportion of firsts that you get? No.
8832. How many qualities do you make? Only two.
8833. Then you only boil the molasses twice? No; four times.
8834. What is the highest price your best sugar has fetched? The last, I think, was £20.
8835. Do you use the ordinary lime process? Yes.
8836. What bags do you use? Heasiau.
8837. What do they cost you? 2½d. apiece, I think.
8838. What is the steamer freight on your sugar to Brisbane? 10s.
8839. And how many miles have you to cart it to the steamer? Four.
8840. Can you tell us what is a fair average crop of cane grown in this district? I do not know. About 35 tons to the acre, I think.
8841. Is that a heavy crop? We have had it as high as 8½ tons to the acre.
8842. Would a 35-ton-to-the-acre crop be all two year old cane? Not always. Some years the cane grows as much in one year as at other times it does in two. It all depends on the weather.
8843. Was the past an exceptionally good season for cane as far as the manufacture of sugar is concerned, or does it take a greater quantity of cane to make a ton of sugar than it did last year? No. The average is 12½ tons.

LOGAN DISTRICT.

(At Eagleby Pocket.)

HANICK PHILLIP OPPELMANN examined:

8844. *By the Chairman*: You are a farmer residing here on your selection? On my freehold property.
8845. And you are manager of the central mill? Yes; and chairman.
8846. How many shareholders are there altogether in the company? Seven.
8847. How has the company been formed? It was just formed under agreement between us; it was not registered. There is simply a private agreement between ourselves.
8848. Then all of the seven shareholders are growing cane. Yes.
8849. Are they all farmers like you? Yes.
8850. How much cane do you grow? Each of us?
8851. Each of you? About ten acres each.
8852. How long has this company been formed? Since 1881.
8853. Have you been crushing every year since then? Yes.

H.
Heinemann.
18 Mar., 1889.

H. P.
Oppermann.
18 Mar., 1889.

8854. How

H. P.
Opfermann.
18 Mar., 1889.

8854. How much cane did you crush last year? 900 tons of cane.
 8855. Was that all grown by the company? No.
 8856. How much was grown by the company? About half.
 8857. Then you purchased the other half from surrounding farmers? Yes.
 8858. What did you give for the cane? 8s. 6d. per ton delivered at the mill.
 8859. How much sugar did you make out of it? 67 tons out of the whole lot.
 8860. And what price did you get for your sugar? We sold it in Brisbane at from £20 to £21. For some of it we got £22.
 8861. How much has the mill cost you? Just as it stands, £4,000.
 8862. What are your annual expenses in connection with working the mill? According as the season is.
 8863. What were your working expenses last year? £250. Last year was an exceptionally bad season owing to the drought. We only had half a crop on the land, and it required double the quantity of cane to make a ton of sugar than it did before. We get 12 tons per acre, and it should average 20 tons per acre. There is another thing; instead of 11 tons of cane to the ton of sugar, we used 19 tons of cane last year for a ton of sugar.
 8864. Since the company was formed have you been making a profit every year? Yes; except one year.
 8865. Which year was that? 1884, when sugar fell from £20 to £12. We had an open pan then; since then we have had a vacuum pan.
 8866. Did you make a profit last year? Yes; a small profit.
 8867. If I understand you correctly, you are working the mill on the co-operative principle? Yes.
 8868. Are you all shareholders alike in the profits? Well, not exactly; but we might say that we are all equal as far as the debt on the mill is concerned. We take no profit until the debt on the mill is paid off.
 8869. Is the mill your own *bona fide* property, or is there a mortgage on it? There is a small mortgage on it yet.
 8870. To what extent now? About £700.
 8871. When you built the mill originally had you to borrow the money to do so? Yes; every penny. We have improved it. It was a small mill at first. The debt of £4,000 is now reduced to £700.
 8872. What labour did you and the company employ for growing cane? Only white labour.
 8873. And are you satisfied to continue growing it with white labour? Yes.
 8874. Can you make a profit with it? Well, I would not say there was much profit in the field, but the profit is in the mill.
 8875. Do you employ any labour, or do you and your family do the work? We employ all the labour in the mill. But in the field almost all the farmers work their cane with their families.
 8876. Then you employ nothing but white labour in the mill? No; we never have.
 8877. Are you satisfied to continue working as you are? Yes.
 8878. Then, in addition to paying off the mortgage as you have done, have you divided any money amongst yourselves for your own support? No.
 8879. Has all the profit gone to reduce the debt on the mill? Yes.
 8880. What are your prospects of cane for this year? It will be very short on account of the drought.
 8881. Are you likely to have a crushing this year? It looks as if we would have very little, or none.
 8882. When the mill was in full working order how many hands did you employ in it? About fourteen.
 8883. Do those who are in company with you work their own farms with their families, as a rule? Yes.
 8884. And do not employ any labour? Very little, if any.
 8885. *By Mr. King:* Do you consider that it pays you to grow cane at 8s. 6d. a ton, if you allow for yourself and family the same wages that you would have to pay to labourers if you employed them? Yes; every outsider that I purchase cane from tells me that as long as they can get 8s. 6d. a ton they will grow cane rather than corn.
 8886. How much did you get for your cane at 8s. 6d. a ton? Only about £20, as it was a bad season. I only had six acres. I grew ten acres, but the flood washed it all away, and we could not get the full amount of cane in.
 8887. How many of your family were working at the cane? I and my son, because the girls were all out serving, because there was such a small living on the farm that they had to go out.
 8888. Did you take your own time to do it? We cultivated about twenty acres.
 8889. You reckon that you could cultivate ten acres to one man? Yes.
 8890. And if you got £20 for six acres that would only be about £33 for the man's wages for the year, supposing you had the same crop as last year? Yes; but last year it was only half a crop.
 8891. What would you consider an average crop? Twenty tons to the acre for a one year crop. In 1886 we made 2 tons of sugar for every acre that we crushed. In 1887 we had hardly anything, we only crushed 30 tons, because the flood had washed it all away.
 8892. Do you ever suffer from frost? Very little.
 8893. Do you crush the cane when it is twelve months old? Yes; if it is fit for it. Sometimes we let it stand over till we get two seasons cane.
 8894. How many farmers are growing cane about here? Fifteen.
 8895. How many acres of cane are cultivated in the whole of this neighbourhood? I think there are about 100 acres of cane on the land now. But we had from 130 to 150 acres in this pocket before the flood.
 8896. Were there ever any other mills about here except this mill? Yes.
 8897. What has become of those mills? They were ruined from the flood; and only one shareholder grows cane there now for me.
 8898. Are the other mills shut up? There is a mill close to the river that is taken down altogether.
 8899. Are any mills working but this one in this neighbourhood now? One mill worked six days last season. Some of the shareholders in it were ruined by the flood, and they gave it up and sold their shares out of the mill.
 8900. What is the reason that the cultivation of sugar cane has diminished in the neighbourhood? Because the flood washed the sugar cane away. Last year there was the drought; it was very dry. I had in about ten acres of cane, but had to plough half of it out as it would not come up; and a good many had to do the same.

H. P.
Oppermann.
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8901. *By the Chairman* : How high was the flood in this pocket? Six feet in this room.
 8902. Then it swept a lot of the laud and sugar cane away? It swept the sugar cane away altogether; there was almost none left, and I had to make a fresh start.
 8903. Then all the land was rendered unfit for sugar cultivation? Yes.
 8904. And that accounts for the small quantity of sugar grown now? Yes; that and the drought.
 8905. Then if the seasons were more favourable more sugar cane would be grown here? Yes.
 8906. Would you grow more? Yes.
 8907. Is it a better crop than maize? Yes.
 8908. Is it more profitable? Yes.
 8909. *By Mr. Cowley* : What wages do you pay the white men in the mill? 15s. and £1 a week and rations.
 8910. Do you ever employ any men yourself? No; not in the farm.
 8911. Not when you are cutting and loading? No; we help each other during the crushing season.
 8912. Then none of the shareholders employ white men in cutting and loading? Well, in 1885 we had white men for cutting cane, but that was not very often.
 8913. Did they work well? Very well.
 8914. Were you satisfied with them? Yes.
 8915. What countrymen were they? English, Irish, and Scotch. They kept coming and going. Some who did not do the work we sacked them. The others liked the work very well and said they would come back again if they could get a job.
 8916. What wages did you pay them? 18s. a week and rations.
 8917. You say you have purchased a good deal of cane? Yes.
 8918. Do those men from whom you purchase the cane grow it with their own labour or do they use kanakas? No; there is only one South Sea Islander in the pocket, and he is in the far end of it.
 8919. *By the Chairman* : Amongst the fifteen farmers? Yes.
 8920. *By Mr. Cowley* : What is the most your crop has yielded you in one year since you commenced growing it? I have had 250 tons of cane from ten acres.
 8921. Is that the heaviest crop you have had? Yes.
 8922. And that was at 8s. 6d.? No; at that time we got 13s. 6d. for it at the mill.
 8923. Is that since you were selling it to your own mill? Yes; sugar has fallen since then, and we could not give so much.
 8924. Then 25 tons of cane to the acre is the heaviest crop you ever got? There might have been some patches which were heavier, but that is an average crop.
 8925. Was the 250 tons of cane a stand-over crop? No; it was twelve months old cane.
 8926. Was it ratoon crop or plant cane? Plant and ratoon.
 8927. What interest did you have to pay on the £4,000 borrowed on the mill? For the first six months 10 per cent., and after that 8 per cent.
 8928. What interest have you to pay now? We still pay 8 per cent.
 8929. You have paid all the interest and reduced the debt to £700? Yes.
 8930. During that time have you declared any dividend? No; the profit has all gone to reduce the debt.
 8931. What else do you do for a living besides growing this cane, because that would not keep you and your family? We grow maize and other crops, and during the winter get our firewood for the mill.
 8932. Do you get paid for that? Yes.
 8933. Do you work on the roads at all? No.
 8934. Then with the assistance of the firewood you support your family on twenty acres of land? Yes; we could do it without the firewood.
 8935. But what does the other ten acres yield you in money? The maize and all brings in about £6 an acre.
 8936. How many horses do you have? Two horses do all the work very well.
 8937. Do you cart the cane to the mill with your own team? Yes.
 8938. The other farmers assist you and you assist them in turn? Yes.
 8939. Then you assist each other without employing any labour? Yes.
 8940. How many tons of cane do you crush in a day at the mill? From 25 to 27 tons. We can crush 30 tons.
 8941. What wages do you pay the man who manages the mill? None.
 8942. The manager gets nothing? No.
 8943. What do you pay the engineer? £2 10s.
 8944. Do you manage the mill? Yes; I am a shareholder and we manage it together. I am the first man; I pay all the men.
 8945. How much does the sugar boiler get? £4 a week.
 8946. And rations? No.
 8947. *By Mr. King* : You said that you crushed 900 tons of cane? Yes.
 9048. Was that 900 that you bought? No; the whole lot.
 8949. Then you made 67 tons of sugar? Yes.
 8950. That is about 13 tons of cane to the ton of sugar? Yes.
 8951. *By the Chairman* : Is the whole of your freehold comprised in those twenty-three acres? No; the freehold is thirty-three acres in extent.
 8952. Do you keep any cows? Yes.
 8953. And do you sell butter and milk? Sometimes a little butter.
 8954. Do you sell eggs? Yes.
 8955. Then you carry on a dairy as well as a farm? Yes; on a small scale.
 8956. Then you do not only live on the proceeds of the ten acres? No.
 8957. Do you grow anything else but maize? Yes, a little hay; I have a little chaff.
 8958. Do you grow sweet potatoes for your own use? Yes; we have to buy none.
 8959. Is the £6 an acre you said you got off your land all profit? Yes.
 8960. Are you quite satisfied with your prospects as a farmer settled in this district? Yes.
 8961. Do you pay your way? Yes; I bought half of the land since I came here for £250, and have paid
 8962. And

- H. P. Oppenheim. 8962. And you do not owe anybody anything? No.
 18Mar., 1889. 8963. Are all the members of the company in the same happy position? Almost all the same. They are all very well satisfied. The sugar mill has done a good deal for us. Every one can make £50 out of the sugar mill if he gets paid.
 8964. Is it an understanding amongst the shareholders that you are not to employ black labour? Yes; it is an understanding that we are not to employ black labour.
 8965. And you are quite satisfied that you are able to grow cane, crush it, and convert it into sugar without black labour? Yes; when the seasons are good.
 8966. By Mr. Cowley: What is the most that you and your son could grow if you grew all sugar cane? Ten acres. We might grow twelve. If we had it all under cane we could not manage it properly in the time; but the other crops come on at different times, and so we can do well with twenty acres when it is not all cane.
 8967. If you had to grow fifty or one hundred acres of cane, and had to pay white men from 15s. to £1 a week and rations, could you make it pay? That is a hard thing to say. White men cannot do so well here as they can in the old country. If I had 100 acres under cane I could not do it with ten men.
 8968. Do you find that they are not reliable; that they do not well in the field? Some are good, but it is hard to get them all good.
 8969. By Mr. King: If you could get good men, would it pay you to cultivate 100 acres of cane and pay those white men wages? There would not be a penny left of profit on the growth of the cane, the profit would come out of the mill.
 8970. By Mr. Cowley: Is all the land under the plough? Yes.
 8971. Can you work it all with horses? Yes.
 8972. Do you trash the cane? No. We did it at the commencement, but since we have had the Rappoe cane we do not trash. I think the cane is better untrashed than trashed. We trash it when we cut it.

TUESDAY, 19 MARCH, 1889.

LOGAN DISTRICT.

(At Beenleigh Plantation.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

FRANCIS GOODING examined:

- F. Gooding. 8973. By the Chairman: What is the name of your place? Beenleigh Plantation.
 19Mar., 1889. 8974. Are you one of the owners? Yes.
 8975. Up to a recent date were you growing sugar cane upon it? Yes; for the last twenty-three years.
 8976. What is the total area of it? 200 acres under cultivation; 340 acres altogether. We have been in the habit of crushing cane for the farmers in the immediate neighbourhood. We crushed it on terms, or bought it straight out.
 8977. When did you first commence to grow cane here? In 1866. We had sugar in the market in 1867.
 8978. Then you have been cultivating sugar cane from 1866 up to the present time? Yes, we have cane now.
 8979. Then up to what date was cane a profitable crop to you? Till about two years ago.
 8980. How many tons of cane used you to average to the acre? It varied a good deal. We have made as much as four tons of sugar to the acre. That was in 1869. The average throughout is about 2 tons 15 cwt.
 8981. How many tons of cane did you get to the acre? 25 tons.
 8982. How many tons of cane went to the ton of sugar? 14 or 15 tons.
 8983. When you got these high averages, what price did you receive for your sugar? From £28 to £32.
 8984. In what year did you begin to discover a decline in the price of sugar? Between four and five years ago. It gradually went down until it reached as low as £15 10s.
 8985. Since the decline in the price of sugar, do you consider that it is a profitable crop to grow? No not under £20 a ton.
 8986. What labour used you to employ when growing cane? Polynesian.
 8987. How many did you employ? Sixty or seventy.
 8988. How many white men? They varied a good deal. We had white men for the horses and carts. We had sometimes a dozen all through the crushing season.
 8989. What was the rate of wages paid to the Polynesians? £6 a year; £18 for the three years under agreement.
 8990. Were those boys indentured to you? Yes.
 8991. What used they to cost you delivered here? The first lot we got here, that is twenty-three years ago, cost us £8 a head; now they run up to £25. £25 is the last we paid.
 8992. Then you continued growing sugar until the flood in 1887? Yes.
 8993. Was the loss that year very heavy? Very heavy indeed. The whole of the cane was destroyed, or very nearly the whole of it. 5,000 to 6,000 gallons of rum were washed out of the distillery, and we had no crushing as the cane was all washed away.

8994. After

8994. After the flood you did not think it worth your while to replant? No; owing to the low price of sugar and the difficulty of getting labour we did not think it advisable.
8995. Explain the difficulty of getting labour. According to the Polynesian Act we are to be debarred from getting them after 1890. We might indent them now, and get them for three years, but after 1890 where are we to get them? There is no certainty of labour unless it is provided in some other way.
8996. Then it was the knowledge that the importation of kanakas ceased in 1890 that had a good deal to do with your not replanting after the flood of 1887? Yes.
8997. What cane have you growing now? Ten acres growing; we have laid the rest of the land under lucerne.
8998. Have you a mill to crush the ten acres? Yes. We crushed a lot last year.
8999. Have you been growing only lucerne this year? Yes.
9000. How many crops do you get in a year? We cut it every month if the weather is at all wet, it sometimes runs for six weeks.
9001. What is the average crop to the acre? From 18 cwt. to a ton of dry hay.
9002. Then you consider lucerne a more profitable crop than sugar? Yes, at the present time.
9003. Is the land adapted for the growth of lucerne? Yes, certainly.
9004. *By Mr. King:* What capital have you invested in your sugar estate? About £9,000.
9005. What number of white men did you employ when working on the sugar plantation? The average was from 12 to 15, sometimes more. Three years ago we cut 400 acres of cane, and we let the cutting by contract, owing to the scarcity of getting islanders. We let the contract for 2s. 6d. a ton for cutting. It was all done by white labour that year.
9006. How many white men do you employ now on the farm? Eight.
9007. Then there were more white labourers employed on it when it was a sugar estate than you employ now when it is a farm? Yes; a great deal more.
9008. Is the fact that you have gone out of sugar entirely due to the flood, the low price of sugar, and the difficulty of obtaining labour? I might mention that the principal things that we went out of sugar for were the flood which swept it all away, the low price of sugar, and owing to our not seeing our way to obtaining in the future a sufficient quantity of certain labour that we could depend on. These three things combined did it.
9009. Has the fact that this railway has been made through the district, thus bringing farm produce nearer to the Brisbane market, not something to do with farmers going out of sugar? No; I do not think so.
9010. Is it not a fact that since the railway passed through the district the people have gone more into general farming, having now a better market than they had? I do not think so. I am speaking for myself. We find the railway freight much cheaper than by water, but we are near the station. Farmers who are situated far from it find that it does not pay to take their produce to the station. We are reaping the benefit of the railway by being so close to the station. That is a considerable benefit, no doubt.
9011. There are two mills in sight across the road; who do they belong to? The one opposite the gate where you came in is the Loye plantation, and belonged to Messrs. Johnstone and Black.
9012. Is it given up now? Yes; entirely.
9013. How long has it been given up? About four or five years.
9014. Do you know the reason why it was given up? It did not pay.
9015. Whose is the mill on the other side of the hill opposite to it? That is Witty's, originally Dickson's, Yatala plantation.
9016. Is it now working? No; they crushed a little cane last season for the farmers; but they are making saccharoka. They have a patent for it.
9017. Do they cultivate cane? No.
9018. Then you may say they have given up working it as a plantation? Yes. It is cut up into ten-acre farms.
9019. With the idea of making it into a central mill? That is the idea I believe.
9020. Are the farms sold yet? No; none of them.
9021. A few years ago were there other plantations in this district? Yes; lots. There were three or four further up the river. They are all closed.
9022. How many mills were working this last season in this part of the district? Only three—Willcocks', The junction, and Kleinsmidt's of Central Island. There are only two in this immediate district.
9023. Then sugar planting generally is being given up in this district? Generally it is.
9024. And the mills are standing idle? Yes.
9025. Do you think that there is anything that the legislature could do that would revive sugar planting in this district? I think so; I believe that it will come round again. Give us certainty of labour, that is one thing; and put a duty on sugar coming into the colony, that is another. I mean by that a reciprocity treaty by which our sugar would be admitted free into the other colonies.
9026. Does this district suffer very much from frost? Occasionally; but sometimes we run a couple of years without the frost doing much damage. It is a thing we cannot depend on; it does damage occasionally.
9027. Have you suffered from drought lately? Yes.
9028. When you have both the frost and the drought would it not make it a very uncertain crop in this district? No. Cane will stand against anything; it is a very hard crop. I tried to encourage the farmers here about twelve months ago to enter into a contract to grow cane and I promised to purchase it from them and make this a central mill. I could not get them to do it.
9029. What did you offer them per ton? 8s. per ton at the river bank.
9030. *By Mr. Cooley:* You offered them 8s. per ton at the river bank? Yes. I tried to work it on a sliding scale. Supposing the best sugar was to fetch £20 a ton, we could give them 8s. per ton, and I offered to rise it 6d. a ton for every £1 it rose above £20, and drop it 6d. for every £1 under £20, on the understanding that I was never to pay less than 7s. per ton. At that price I would take delivery at the river bank and punt it myself, and take all the responsibility after that. For instance, if sugar was £25 a ton I would give them 12s. a ton for their cane.
9031. Did the farmers accept your proposal? They promised 60 acres, but that was not sufficient for me to commence with.

- F. Gooding. 9032. How much would you require to try it? 200 acres.
 9033. Do you know the reason why they did not accept this? No.
 19 Mar., 1889. 9034. From your knowledge of farming, do you think that that price would pay them? I do. I think it a fair average price for sugar.
 9035. What distance would those men have to cart the cane? Not a quarter of a mile to the punting place.
 9036. Could those men grow cane at that price and make it pay with white labour, or would they have to employ coloured labour? They generally do it with their own families. They have acknowledged that at this price sugar cane would pay them better than any other crops they could grow, and yet they will not grow it.
 9037. You say that the difficulty in getting South Sea Islanders and the increased cost of their introduction is one of the reasons why you abandoned sugar cane growing. If there was a good supply of this labour at a reasonable rate would you be willing to go into sugar again on your own account? Yes I should.
 9038. What rate of wages do you pay white men—ploughmen and farm labourers—in this district? I have four first-class working men—agricultural labourers—from home. They are under a six months' agreement at 26s. a week and they find themselves. After that if they suit me and agree to keep their place I would raise their wages 2s. 6d. a week.
 9039. Do these men do all kinds of farm work, hoeing and chipping? No; it is all horse work that they do.
 9040. Have you had white men doing such work as hoeing and chipping? No.
 9041. Is that because it does not pay or because they won't do the work? They won't do the work.
 9042. What has been the reduction in your wages sheet since you left off growing sugar cane; that is in regard to the white men in the district? About one-third.
 9043. Does that include skilled labour—carpenters, engineers, &c.? We have none now. We formerly had some. This reduction includes all those.
 9044. Is there anything in the climate to prevent a white man doing a fair day's work in the field? In the open, such as working horses and all that kind of work, they can; but I have seen them chuck it up scores of times, going into the cane. It could be done for six months in the year, but white men won't do it in summer. When those farmers and their families grow the cane themselves, they go out into it very early in the morning and work until the heat of the day, and then they go indoors, and go out to work again in the evening. But when you employ white labouring men, they expect to have their regular working hours, but the families of the farmers do not care about that.
 9045. Would you be willing to start sugar cane here solely with white labour? No; certainly not.
 9046. *By the Chairman*: When was this agreement offering to purchase cane from the farmers drawn up? Eight months ago.
 9047. I see by it that eleven farmers agreed to it? Yes.
 9048. Would those farmers agree to grow it with white labour? They would grow it with their own families.
 9049. Do you not think that if you adopted the same hours with white labourers as those adopted by the farmers and their families you would be able to grow sugar cane with white labour? I can't get them to do it. I have tried it. The men do not like getting up early in the morning. They like their regular and proper hours.
 9050. Was the flood in 1887 exceptionally high? Yes. The whole of the cane on the banks of the Albert and Logan was washed away.
 9051. Had that very considerably to do with the reduction of cane growing in this district? Yes.

(At the Junction Plantation.)

KARL REHFELT examined:

- K. Rehfelt. 9052. *By the Chairman*: What is the name of your place? The Junction Mill.
 19 Mar., 1889. 9053. How many acres have you altogether? It is in two pieces—of fourteen acres and fifty-seven acres. There are seventy-one acres altogether.
 9054. How many acres have you under cane? About forty.
 9055. How long have you been growing cane here? I have had the mill nine seasons; this is the tenth season. I grew cane before, but sold it to Coudery.
 9056. Then for nine years you have been growing cane and crushing it on your own account? Yes.
 9057. And have you crushed it for anyone else? Yes.
 9058. How many acres of cane did you crush last year? Twenty-eight acres of my own cane.
 9059. How many tons of cane to the acre did you get? 240 tons off the twenty-eight acres.
 9060. How many tons of sugar did you get? About 25 tons of sugar. The most of the cane was frosted.
 9061. How much did you get for the sugar per ton? I got £18 for the first. I sent the balance in the week before last, and do not know yet what I will get; but I think I will get nearly £22 a ton.
 9062. When you crush cane for other farmers, do you buy it or crush it for them on terms? I buy it.
 9063. How much do you give for it? 8s. a ton on the rollers.
 9064. How much cane did you crush for them last season? 388 tons.
 9065. What labour did you employ to grow your sugar cane? I had some white and some black. I had four blacks last season; and I paid them £20 by the year. I kept them all the year, working them at everything in the place—cutting and in the mill.
 9066. How many white men do you employ? Three; and in the season I have fifteen or sixteen or sometimes twenty men cutting cane. I give them from 15s. to 18s. a week and rations.
 9067. Do those farmers who grow cane for the mill do so by white labour?—What labour do they employ? They work their farms themselves with their own families.
 9068. Do you work the cane yourself and with your own family? Yes; what I can do I do myself.
 9069. Who works the mill? I get a sugar boiler, and look after the mill myself. I also employ an engineer. I give the sugar boiler £3 a week and rations, and the engineer £2 a week and rations.

9070. How

F. Gooding.

9070. How many men do you employ during the crushing season besides those two? Eleven.
9071. Are all those white men? There are four blacks in the mill.
9072. How much capital have you represented in the mill? I spent a good amount in the first place. 19 Mar., 1889.
- The mill runs up to £1,700.
9073. What have you paid altogether from the time you started till now? £2,500. I have just got a vacuum pan now.
9074. Does cane growing and purchasing cane from the farmers and crushing it pay you? Not much; it just keeps me moving. It pays the working expenses, and I get a little over for myself. When we get from £18 to £20 it just pays.
9075. What are your working expenses for the year, for the mill and plantation—altogether, including wages and rations? About £450 for the mill and farm altogether.
9076. Have you any interest to pay on borrowed capital? I have to pay bank interest on £1,300 mortgage on the mill.
9077. Are you able to pay the bank interest and working expenses and have a profit? It just about clears them.
9078. Was the £1,300 the original sum that you borrowed, or have you reduced that sum?—Have you paid any off? Yes; I have paid some off.
9079. What was the original amount? £2,500.
9080. Then do you have corn and maize and everything on the farm? Yes.
9081. So you do not depend entirely on the sugar? No; I make something out of cows and pigs.
9082. How many acres have you under maize? Fourteen acres. I change about from maize to potatoes.
9083. How many bushels do you get to the acre? Last year I had 100 bushels for one and a-half acres of white maize. The other was rusted. I got 300 bushels off twelve and a-half acres.
9084. Did you suffer anything from the flood two years ago? I had a great loss. The whole of my cane rotted at the root, and I made a poor season. We had to plough it out, and then came a very dry time and we could not replant the cane.
9085. Had you to plough up all your cane and replant? Yes; all the cane on the low ground. I had a small portion of cane on the high ground which was saved.
9086. Then the crop that you crushed last year was affected by the drought.—Was it a light crop or heavy? Very light.
9087. Then you suffered in 1887 by the flood and in 1888 by the drought? Yes.
9088. Are you satisfied to go on planting cane? I think I will go on if I can. I intend to extend my operations in cane growing and plant some fresh land. It will pay better than maize. The maize is subject to rust and also to drought.
9089. Do you get any frost? A little on the island.
9090. Does it affect the cane to any extent? Not much.
9091. *By Mr. King*: Is there much cane growing in this neighbourhood? The farmers are not satisfied with their price. The farmers find that cane does not pay, and maize does not pay, but sugar is more favourable for growing. If they could get 10s. a ton for their cane they would grow more.
9092. Is the quantity of land under cane increasing or decreasing?—Are the farmers taking to growing more, or are they growing out of it? They would grow more if they got a better price for the cane.
9093. Was there more cane grown some years ago than there is now? Yes; it was all cane, and only maize enough for their own use.
9094. If you could not get kanakas would you grow cane with white men? Yes; it is no matter. It would have to be at low wages—from 15s. to 18s. a week. At anything less than £1 a week, we can do with white men just as well as with blacks. If they want 25s. or 30s. a week, we would not be able to give it.
9095. *By Mr. Cowley*: How many of your family help you on the farm? They are all married, and are not much help now.
9096. I saw three or four boys working about as I came in to the house? They are not mine.
9097. Do you pay for them? No; they are friends of mine who stay here. They are only little children.
9098. How much sugar did you make altogether last year? 46 tons. It is not all dried; there may be 50 tons yet.
9099. Do you find any trouble in getting white men at 12s. a week? Yes; I give 15s. and 16s., and some of them 17s. a week in the season. I give 15s. after the season for ploughmen. I have no trouble in getting them. I get as many as I want.
9100. Do those men work well with you? Yes. I get my own countrymen, my neighbours. I do not give much work to swagsmen.
9101. What hours do you work your men when you are working in the mill? From 7 a.m. till 6 p.m. Sometimes later, and I pay extra for it. They have one hour for dinner.
9102. How much freight do you pay on sugar to Brisbane? 10s. a ton.
9103. Do they take it from the wharf? Yes.
9104. Do you sell molasses to the distillery? Yes; I get 3½d. per gallon delivered at the distillery four miles away.

(At Stegelitz Plantation.)

ALBERT KLEINSMITDT examined:

9105. *By the Chairman*: What is the name of your plantation? Stegelitz.
9106. How many acres have you altogether? About 500.
9107. How many acres have you cultivated? Seventy-three or seventy-four acres.
9108. How many acres are under sugar cane? Say, sixty acres.
9109. How long have you been growing sugar cane? For the last fifteen years.
9110. Always on the same ground? Pretty well fifteen years on this place. We have been growing cane altogether for twenty years.
9111. Have you had cane in every year? Yes.

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9112. Have you manured it as you went along? Yes, part of it every year.
 9113. How many tons of cane did you cut last year? Say, 700 tons; that is near as I recollect.
 9114. What quantity of sugar did you make? About 48 or 50 tons.
 9115. Did you crush cane for any of the surrounding farmers? Yes.
 9116. Did you buy it from them? Yes.
 9117. What did you give for it? 8s. 6d. last year, delivered at the mill.
 9118. How many tons did you purchase at the mill last year? About 500 tons.
 9119. What quantity of sugar did you make out of it? About 38 or 40 tons.
 9120. What price did you get for your sugar this season? From £14 to £22; that is for seconds, thirds and fourths. For firsts we got from £20 to £22.
 9121. What do you do with your molasses? It is sold at 3½d. a gallon, delivered at the wharf here for the distillery.
 9122. What amount of capital have you invested in the plantation, in land, buildings, and the mill? About £5,000.
 9123. What are your average working expenses? During last year they were about £350.
 9124. Is the plantation free of debt? No.
 9125. What is the liability attached to it? £1,100.
 9126. Was it at any time more than that? Yes, it has been up to £2,000.
 9127. Then you have been gradually reducing the debt out of your profits? Yes.
 9128. What interest have you to pay? From 8 per cent. to 10 per cent.
 9129. When you said that your working expenses were £350 a year, do you include the interest in that? No, that is without interest.
 9130. What labour do you employ? Europeans.
 9131. Have you always been employing Europeans? Yes, with the exception of six South Sea islanders during one season.
 9132. What average wages do you pay the Europeans? From 16s. to 18s. and rations a week.
 9133. Can you get as many labourers as you require? Yes, without any trouble.
 9134. Do the Europeans perform their work satisfactorily? Yes; we have always had very good hands.
 9135. Do you consider that sugar cane growing is paying you? Well it has been paying with hard labour; we have to work very hard for it.
 9136. Are you satisfied to continue growing cane? While we have it, we must.
 9137. Is it a better paying crop than any of the others you had originally—maize for instance? Yes; in this district.
 9138. What is your average crop per acre of maize? About 40 bushels.
 9139. What profit do you get on that? It varies a great deal. It has been from 2s. 6d. a bushel to 4s. 6d.
 9140. What labour do the farmers from whom you purchase the sugar cane employ? Their own. They work by families.
 9141. Are they satisfied to grow cane for you and deliver it for 8s. 6d.? Yes; if they can't get any more.
 9142. Do they consider it a better paying crop than maize? So it seems.
 9143. Have they intimated to you their intention of discontinuing growing sugar cane? Some of them have, and some of them promised to largely increase their cane.
 9144. Are they under any agreement to grow cane? No.
 9145. Does the soil which you have been cultivating for so many years show any signs of exhaustion? It did before it was manured, but after that it grew pretty well, just as good as it did before.
 9146. Have you continuously grown cane in the same soil or changed it? We always change it. We put in a crop of maize or some other crop before we put cane in again.
 9147. What manure do you put on the land? We, as a rule, put on megass, and stockyard manure. We have tried bone dust.
 9148. Then those three varieties of manure have been successful in fertilising the soil? Yes; but they are not all equally good.
 9149. Which is the best? The stockyard manure.
 9150. *By Mr. King:* Those white labourers that you employ, are they neighbouring farmers or awagsmen? Mostly neighbouring selectors, with the exception of one or two outsiders.
 9151. Most of them Germans? Yes, with the exception of two or three in the field.
 9152. Have you been increasing your acreage of cane? Yes.
 9153. You are growing more cane now than you were some time ago? Yes.
 9154. Is the acreage of cane round about here increasing? No, it has been decreasing.
 9155. Are there any more mills besides yours in the district? Yes, there are three besides mine.
 9156. Whose are they? Hick's, Cooper's, and Piddly's.
 9157. Were all these working last season? Yes.
 9158. How is it that the acreage of cane is not increasing if it is such a paying crop? Because the price given for cane has been as low as 6s. and 6s. 6d. a ton, and it does not pay the farmers to grow it at that price, so they ploughed out their cane. They are replanting it now.
 9159. All your land is under the plough, I suppose? Nearly all. There are about fifteen acres not free of stumps yet.
 9160. Do you grow cane on land which is not under the plough? Yes.
 9161. How do you send your sugar to market? By steamer from the wharf here.
 9162. *By Mr. Cowley:* How many acres did you crush last year? Forty-five acres.
 9163. You got 700 tons of cane? Yes.
 9164. Would it pay you to sell cane at 8s. 6d. a ton delivered at the mill, if you were growing it for the mill? Could you make a living out of it? That is a difficult question to answer. We would have no interest to pay. It would pay if we had not to meet the interest.
 9165. Then you can grow cane paying your white labourers 16s. and 18s. a week, and make it pay? I think there would be a little profit off 8s. 6d. a ton if I was paying wages to European labourers.
 9166. Would it be worth while going into it as a speculation? No.
 9167. Then if those farmers did not have their families working for them cane growing would not pay at 8s. 6d. a ton? No.

9168. Do you sell your sugar in Brisbane? Yes; in Brisbane and Melbourne.
9169. What does it cost to send it to Brisbane? 8s. a ton.
9170. You say that your working expenses were only £350 last year. Does that include the money for purchasing cane? No.
9171. How many men do you employ on an average during the year? During the season we employ from fourteen to fifteen; out of the season we have from three to five.
9172. Would it average nine all the year round? No, not it; about seven all the year round, as the crushing season only lasts three months.
9173. How many of yourselves work? Two besides myself.
9174. That £350 does not cover your wages? We have other work to do besides that.
9175. Besides the work on the farm? Yes. There is fencing and fresh land to clear.
9176. But that is all on your land. You are not paid for that by other people? Yes; our own land.
9177. Is that £350 all that you pay in wages to the men? Yes; hardly that. But it would hardly cover our own labour. We reckon our own in the profits.
9178. This £350 does not include the wages of yourself and your two assistants? No.
9179. What does it cost you to ration your men? It costs us about 6s. per head per week.
9180. What returns do you get from your other crops? Maize?
9181. Yes? About 40 bushels an acre for corn, and about 2 tons of hay.
9182. Can you tell us what were the gross returns from your farm last year? How much money did you get from your farm last year? I can hardly tell you that myself. I can tell you the gross return of the whole thing, including what we crushed for other people. The whole return was 90 tons of sugar, at an average rate of £17 10s., equal to £1,575. The other produce was mostly consumed by our horses and men. Sugar is our staple product.
9183. *By Mr. King:* You say that the produce of the farm was consumed by the horses and men? Yes.
9184. Did you charge that to the working expenses? Yes.
9185. *By the Chairman:* Have you skilled mechanics during the crushing season in the shape of sugar boilers and engineers? I have another brother who is doing the sugar boiling, and an engineer.
9186. Then you save the expense of the one in your working expenses? No; we have to pay my brother £3 a week, and that is included in the £350. We only pay the £3 during the crushing season.
9187. Then practically you do work the plantation on the family principle? Well, we have to pay the sugar boiler and engineer. There are myself and two brothers working for the family.
9188. Are those men who grow cane for you living and farming on their own freeholds? Yes.
9189. And have they been on their freeholds for some years? Yes; their lands have been freehold since they started.
9190. Did they select originally? The majority bought it second-hand.
9191. *By Mr. Cowley:* These seven men that you employ are they independent of your brothers and yourself? Yes; but seven is a high average.
9192. *By the Chairman:* Are labouring men plentiful? Yes; we have a good supply.
9193. *By Mr. Cowley:* Are labouring men plentiful down here, apart from your neighbouring selectors? Yes; but our neighbouring selectors are very glad to get the work. There is no occasion for travellers to come here. The sons of the selectors are the men who work for us. They work for their fathers on the farm, and come to us during the crushing season.
9194. Do you cut your own firewood? We get part of it cut by the neighbouring farmers, and cut some ourselves.
9195. What do you pay for firewood? 4s. a cord on their farm, and we get it ourselves.
9196. How many horses do you keep? Five or six working horses. During the crushing season one or two farmers' horses are also at work, so that five horses with their assistance keep us going. During the biggest portion of the year we have six horses.
9197. *By the Chairman:* You state that you plant cane on land that has not been stumped? Yes.
9198. Do you do it with the hoe? Yes.
9199. Do the labourers you employ offer any objection to that? No; they have never objected to it.
9200. Do you consider that working in the cane field at any time of the year is detrimental to the health of Europeans? No more than any other work in the district.
9201. Could Europeans do work in the field in the district in which you are living as well as kanakas? We have never employed kanakas excepting during one season and they only did cane cutting.
9202. Then the Europeans you have employed for fifteen years have not offered any objections to work in the cane field? No.
9203. *By Mr. Cowley:* In these working expenses do you include the freight of the sugar to the market? No; simply labour and rations.
9204. Not lime, oil, sugar-bags, or firewood? No; those are separate items again.
9205. Then the working expenses quoted simply cover rations and wages? Exactly.

WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH, 1889.

LOGAN DISTRICT.

(At Otmoor, Coomera.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A.

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

JOHN GARTSIDE examined.

9206. *By the Chairman:* What experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar? Eighteen or nineteen years.

J. Gartside.

9207. In Queensland, or other places? In South Queensland chiefly.

9208. What is the name of the plantation? Otmoor.

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9209. And

- J. Gartside. 9209. And you are the manager of it? Yes; supposed to be.
 9210. What is the total area of the land? 1,360 acres—1 am within the mark.
 20 Mar. 1889. 9211. How many are now under cultivation, giving the area under different crops? 220 acres under sugar cane, fifty acres under maize, four acres under sweet potatoes, and one under lucerne.
 9212. How many acres of cane were crushed for the plantation last year? 120 acres.
 9213. How much sugar was made from the cane cut? 130 tons.
 9214. How many tons of cane did you get per acre—give the average? We get a very low density in the scrub. About 20 tons per acre.
 9215. Did you purchase cane from the neighbouring selectors? Not last season.
 9216. Have you done so previously? Yes.
 9217. How much did you pay for the cane per ton? 8s. delivered. It did not pay them to grow it at that price, so they gave it up.
 9218. How many? Three of them only. Three farmers.
 9219. How much molasses did you make last year? 6,000 gallons.
 9220. What did you do with it? We used some for the horses.
 9221. What is the approximate amount of capital invested in the mill? That is a question I am not going to answer.
 9222. Cannot you tell us? About £12,000.
 9223. Of your own knowledge do you know if the mill paid interest on the £12,000 in 1888. The sugar is not all sold yet.
 9224. What were your working expenses for 1888? £1,750. That includes whites and blacks, and rations and everything.
 9225. What labour is employed in working the plantation? Europeans and kanakas.
 9226. Will you kindly state the number? About seven Europeans during the crushing season, and about forty-five kanakas. That is near enough, I think.
 9227. What were the average wages paid to the kanakas? To include rations and clothes?
 9228. Wages only? Oh! wages only. Some we pay £30 a year to and some engage for £18 a year, so I put down the average at £22 a year. That is not including rations. We engage the majority of the boys for twelve months.
 9229. Whether are those indentured time-expired boys? A portion of them were indentured, and a portion are time-expired boys.
 9230. What rate of wages do you pay the time-expired boys and the boys coming from the islands? Well, you see we have to pay some of those islanders at the rate of £9 a year, and some of them get £6 a year. The boys who have been in Queensland before will not re-indent without an advance of wages, and they get £9 a year. The first boys we pay £6.
 9231. Are you able to state what was the amount of wages paid to Europeans and kanakas during 1888? No; you have got that answer in the £1,750, our working expenses, which includes that.
 9232. Have you employed Europeans to do the field work of the plantation? Yes.
 9233. What was the result? Failure.
 9234. In what was it a failure? They cannot stand the heat amongst the cane. When the cane gets up a certain height they are not fit for chipping and trashing.
 9235. What wages have you offered Europeans to do that work? £1 a week and rations.
 9236. Did they declare themselves unfit? Yes. My overseer had to give up work before Christmas, and I had to do it myself.
 9237. What description of labour do you consider most suitable in field work? Kanaka in cane growing; no doubt about that.
 9238. Is the whole area under cultivation by sugar under the plough? A portion of it, about 130 acres are under the plough; the rest is all stumps.
 9239. Do you employ Europeans for ploughing? Yes.
 9240. What wages do you pay your ploughmen? £1 a week and rations, wet or dry.
 9241. When you have the whole of the land under the plough, will you be able to employ fewer kanakas and more Europeans? Yes; we would be able to employ them; but whether it will be done, that is another question. They cannot do chipping and trashing.
 9242. How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each black boy? Five acres. If he does five acres amongst land with the stumps still in he does a fair thing.
 9243. How many acres do you think a European could do, if able to use the plough and horse-hoe? Do you mean ploughing with the horse only? You do not mean chipping and hoeing also?
 9244. Yes? Twelve acres, if he had to do the chipping and trashing. He could do twenty acres if he had merely to do the ploughing.
 9245. Supposing he was to do all the ploughing with horses, and the chipping and trashing the same as a kanaka, he could do twelve acres, you think? He might.
 9246. Do your kanakas suffer in health? Not a bit.
 9247. Have you seen the health of the Europeans affected by working in the field? Yes; I have had two or three sick.
 9248. What did they suffer from? Heat. They cannot stand the heat amongst the cane.
 9249. Is it bodily ailment? Sometimes they say it is biliousness. There is always something wrong with them; they can't stand the heat, and knock off.
 9250. Was the plantation originally scrub land? Yes.
 9251. What was the cost per acre for felling and burning off the scrub? £7 an acre.
 9252. What would be the cost of stumping and making it fit for the plough? £12 an acre.
 9253. Has the cane suffered from any disease? No.
 9254. Does it suffer from frost? Not much here; we are well protected by the Tambourine Mountain on the west. We are in a pocket and are well protected.
 9255. Did you suffer by the flood in 1887? Yes; heavily.
 9256. Was the whole of your sugar land under water? The whole of it was.
 9257. Did you have to replant? No; it was back water and did not wash the cane out, and it soon subsided. It washed about two miles of fencing away.
 9258. What was the cost of your machinery? £5,000.

9259. Where was it manufactured? A portion of it in Glasgow and a portion in the colony.

9260. What is the cost of your annual overhaul and repairs? £12 for brick work. The machinery does not want any overhaul.

9261. *By Mr. King:* Supposing that the importation of kauakas was stopped at the end of 1890 according to the existing law, would you be able to carry on the plantation with white labour alone? No; I will not manage it, I will chuck up the billet.

9262. Do you think you could not make it pay? No; nor any other man in creation. The bank had better chuck it up. I have had two years' experience of white men. Just when you want them most, and the whole year's work depends on having them, they stop work and leave you in the lurch.

9263. Where were you working a plantation with white labour? I was not working, but I had a share in Black and Muir's Novae Plantation.

9264. Did you try to work it with white labour? For two years I tried it.

9265. What was the result? The result was that as soon as they found that they had me they struck for higher wages for 3s. a week more. That was just at the crushing time; and they would do that always.

9266. Is the cultivation of sugar cane extending round about here? The farmers would grow it if they could get suitable labour. As it is they will not grow it.

9267. Is there more cane round about here than there used to be? No.

9268. Is it decreasing? Decreasing at the present time.

9269. What is the name of the plantation that we passed when coming up here ; on the other side of the Coomera? Mr. Howard's Riverside plantation. He has gone bung. It is not working now.

9270. Then Howard has failed? We do not know if he has failed, but the mill is closed at the present time: it is shut up.

6271. Do you consider that the construction of the Southport line of railway has induced farmers to give up sugar and grow other crops for the Brisbane market? If you would go and assist our member to get the river deepened, that is what we want. This is the Upper Coomera? You will have to build a branch line or deepen the river before you will get the railway to pay.

9272. But don't you think that the effect of making the railway will be that the people will go out of sugar and find it more profitable to grow other produce for the Brisbane market? No, they would flood the market and the result would be over-production, and then there would be no profit. I do not think they would.

9273. Do you consider that if the plantations in this district were able to procure kanakas as easily as they have done in the past the sugar industry would revive in this district? I do think so. Sugar is at its lowest margin now, and I do not think it will ever be lower.

9274. Do you think that even at the present price of sugar you would be able to continue? Yes; and increase, too.

9275. *By Mr. Cowley*: You said that some time ago you crushed cane for the growers? Yes, about two years ago.

9276. Are you still prepared to purchase cane? Yes, at a price.

9277. At what price? 8s. a ton delivered. I only get £17 a. ton for my sugar in Brisbane. I would give them 8s. a ton for cane. If I got £18 or £19, I would give them 1s. a ton more. I would agree to purchase their cane on a sliding scale.

9278. For every £1 a shilling? No, I would not rise at the rate of 1s. for every £1.

9279. How much would you pay if you got £20 a ton for your sugar? If I got £20 a ton for my sugar I would pay 9s. a ton. That is a rise of 6d. a ton.

9280. What quantity could you take from the growers? As much as they liked to grow. We could crush 60 tons a day.

9281. Could you take 40 tons a day, or 50 tons a day from them? I do not think so, without neglecting our own place.

9282. Well, what could **you** take? Twenty tons a day from outside growers, and that would leave me 40 tons to put through for myself.

9263. When you say that one white man can cultivate twelve acres when the stumps are out, do you mean that he could plough, plant, chip, trash, and cut the cane, and carry it to the mill? I mean that a man with a pair of horses could plough and use the horse-hoe, and chip and trash, and do the whole of the field work of twelve acres.

9284. Could he plant the cane and cut it, and cart it to the mill? I am talking of 1888.

9285. Could he do the whole of the work for the twelve acres? No, I do not think he could.

9286. Then he could do the whole of the cultivation for twelve acres? Yes. He could do twenty acres as far as the horse work goes, but he would require a boy to do the chipping and trashing.

9287. Does any of the £1,750 which you pay annually for working expenses go out of the country? Every thing is spent in the district, or in Brisbane; every farthing for kanakas and Europeans, store goods, and clothing: none of it is sent away out of the country.

9238. *By the Chairman:* Can you state the cause which, in your opinion, has depressed the sugar industry? Well, I can't tell you anything, except the low price of sugar. The question of £2 or £3 a ton means the difference between profit and loss.

9259. What suggestions could you offer for the revival of the industry? None. Whether it is over-production or not I don't know. There is a ring in Brisbane and they seem to have it in their own hands.

9:20. *By Mr. Cowley:* How long does your crushing last? We do not crush more than three months.

9291. If you had cape how long could you crush? Six months.

9292. Then you could take 3,000 tons of cane in a season? Yes, if the people would grow it for us at a price. I do not believe in crushing more than three or four months because if you do you neglect your cultivation.

9293. But you could get labour for both? Yes.

JOHN WILLIAM CORNELIUS HOWARD examined :

9294. *By the Chairman* : You are owner of the River Side plantation? Yes.

9295. How long have you been residing there? I should say thirteen years.

9296. What experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar? First of all we bought from the farmers, and then I rented a farm and that, with some land of my own, I cultivated.

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J. Gartside.

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20 Mar., 1889.

J. W. C.
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9297. What is the total area of your plantation now? Now it has been cut up altogether; but the total area I had under cultivation was eighty acres.
9298. But what was the total area of your own land? It would be about sixty-six acres.
9299. Of the sixty-six acres, how many were under sugar cane? About thirty acres.
9300. How much sugar cane was on the leased portion? About sixty acres.
9301. That would be ten acres more than you said? Yes; but ten acres fell out lately.
9302. How many acres of cane were crushed last season? About fifty acres.
9303. What weight of cane did you get to the acre? I did not weigh any of my own cane that went to the mill.
9304. What quantity of sugar did you make? I made 80 tons of sugar. There were 172,400 gallons of juice which produced 80 tons of sugar. That was in 1886. That was my last crushing. I left nearly twenty acres of cane standing.
9305. Then any information that you are giving us will apply entirely to 1886? Yes.
9306. What amount of capital is invested in your plantation including your mill? Well, I should think about £8,000.
9307. Has it ever returned you a profit? No. I might have had a small profit before the debt increased, but as things went down the debt increased and profits fell short.
9308. What is the debt on it? The £8,000 would be about the debt on it, and I have had to pay interest on that.
9309. Did the returns from your cultivated and leased land pay interest on that money and all the working expenses? No, they did not.
9310. Supposing that you had had no interest to pay and nothing to pay but your own working expenses how would you have come out of it? I might just have come out.
9311. What were your working expenses in 1886? I did not put them down. I have no memorandum of them.
9312. Can you, from memory, give an approximate amount? No; not from memory.
9313. What labour did you employ? Both white and South Sea.
9314. In what proportion? I should think about equal numbers.
9315. Can you state the numbers? About forty hands were employed during the crushing season.
9316. That would be about twenty of each? Yes; they varied. Sometimes there were very few whites, and sometimes very few blacks.
9317. What wages did you pay the coloured men? The standard wages. Sometimes I had to give 15s. a week, and at times 10s. and 12s.
9318. Were those time-expired boys? Yes.
9319. What wages did you give to Europeans? They used to get 25s. a week, and sometimes 30s. and rations; from £1 up, according to the work.
9320. What do you consider the best kind of labour for working in the cane field? South Sea Islanders. I do not consider them cheaper than white men, but they are more reliable. They used to be. I do not know what they are now.
9321. Have you ever tried Europeans exclusively? Yes; I did when I first started.
9322. With what result? I could not get on with them. They wanted too much wages altogether at that time. But that was the time when we started. We never tried them at cultivation altogether. We had no field work for them then. We had plenty of work for them in the mill.
9323. Since you commenced to cultivate, have you employed Europeans in field work? Yes; always as ploughmen.
9324. Have you had any difficulty with them in that respect? No.
9325. Then, it is only with day labourers? Yes; in the crushing season the difficulty sets in.
9326. What did the difficulty consist of? When they got their money they went away and got drunk, and were not fit for their work again. They were always coming and going. You might occasionally get a few men to remain right through the season. Several times I had men who carried on all through the season.
9327. Then, the debt on the plantation is still lying on it? Yes; to a great extent. It is about £4,000 now.
9328. Are you growing any other produce now? No; I cut the land up and sold some portions of it.
9329. And you do not intend to go into cane growing again? No.
9330. What was the cost of your mill and machinery? Nearly £2,000, including vacuum pans, &c.
9331. Where was it manufactured? In Glasgow.
9332. What is the reason that you are not going into sugar again?—Is it want of capital? Want of inclination more than anything else, and want of capital. I have lost enough money already, and I think I would still continue losing if I went on.
9333. Was any of the ground that you cut up and sold bought by farmers? No; none of it is under cultivation.
9334. *By Mr. King:* To what do you attribute the fact that your plantation was a failure? Well, as regards the sugar and the crops it was not a failure, but I could not make it pay.
9335. What was the reason? I attribute it to the decline in the price of sugar, and at the same time that that occurred there was a rise in the price of wages, and we had to give more for our coloured labour. As the price of sugar declined the price of labour rose.
9336. Are you still cultivating any of your ground with any other crops? Not an inch.
9337. Is sugar growing in the Coomera district increasing or decreasing? Decreasing, I should think.
9338. Is there an increase in the cultivation of any other crops? Yes, I expect there is; because as the farmers go out of cane they go into other crops.
9339. Is there not an increase in the agricultural settlement of the district; have no more farmers come on the land, and is there no more ground taken up? No; all the available land is taken up. The district has been selected for a long time.
9340. What crops are being grown in the district? Maize, potatoes, and lucerne chiefly.
9341. Are those crops found to pay better than sugar cane? Farmers like them better. Some farmers would prefer sugar cane; they say it is easier to cultivate.

9342. Is there a good market for all the produce which is grown in the district? Yes; in Brisbane.
 9343. I suppose that the construction of the Southport Railway will enable farmers to get their produce to the Brisbane market easier? The river not being deepened, punts have been lying eight and nine days with their cargo on board, in consequence of which half of it was spoiled before it got to Brisbane.

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9344. Then the opening of the railway will cause sugar growing to go out and the cultivation of other products to go in? Yes.

9345. Do you think of going back into sugar? Not the slightest idea.

9346. Have you sold your mill? No; unfortunately I have not. I do not see any chance of selling it. I have tried to sell portions of it, but have not succeeded in any way.

9347. Have you tried to make it into a central mill, and to get the farmers to grow cane for it? We did at first, but found that the farmers were not altogether reliable. We had to give a certain amount for a certain density, and sometimes they used to think their cane a good deal better than it was; so I had to go into cultivation of sugar cane for my own protection.

9348. What price did you give for cane? We used to have to punt it, and it came to about 10s. a ton delivered on the bank.

9349. Were the farmers satisfied with that? They were paid according to the density. Some I could deal with and others I could not deal with. Some were satisfied and some were not.

9350. Then is there no prospect of the farmers in this district growing sugar cane for a central mill? I do not think they would. I would be very sorry for you to take my statements as regards the farmers; I am only making them to you as between myself and the farmers; I can go no further than that. I have never had an interview with the farmers on the subject at all.

9351. Would you be willing to grow cane and sell it to a central mill? No; I would not grow it at all. I do not like agriculture. If I could get anything else to do I would not do it.

9352. *By Mr. Cowley:* When you erected your factory was it with the intention of making it a central mill? Yes. I did not intend to grow cane myself.

9353. Then you were compelled to go into sugar growing in consequence of not getting a proper supply of cane for the mill? Yes; the expenses were too heavy at 10s. a ton, and punting extra. We gave them 10s. for 8 density.

9354. How did you rise or fall? We rose 1s. a ton to the per cent. of density, and lowered in the same proportions.

9355. *By the Chairman:* Have you thought over the present condition of the sugar industry in Queensland? I have thought a good deal.

9356. What do you think are the causes which have contributed to the present depression in the sugar industry? My opinion is that it is owing to an overstocked market.

9357. Have you thought over any suggestions you can offer by which the industry may be assisted? No; I have thought of nothing, for the simple reason that it seems to me that when the crops are failing, which they are to a certain extent now, there is not so much in the market, and, consequently, the price rises. But I do not think that the planters are any better off, because they have not got the sugar to sell.

9358. Has the flood of 1887 caused a considerable number of the farmers in this district to discontinue the growth of cane? I cannot say. It was a serious loss to me.

9359. Do you know if the farmers who grew cane there have since discontinued doing so? I do not know.

9360. Do you think that the discontinuance in the growth of cane commenced before 1887? Oh! yes.

9361. When sugar was realising £30 and £35, what was the price of sugar cane? I do not know.

9362. What is the highest price you have paid for cane in this district? It was based on a standard of 8 density, for which we paid 10s. a ton, and it has gone as high as 12s. a ton, and I have given 13s. a ton for small quantities.

9363. Do you know that in 1886 as high as 14s. 6d. was paid for it? I was not aware of it.

9364. Are you aware that when Mr. Hodgkinson visited this district with the object of ascertaining the views of the farmers on the central mill question that he was supplied with the prices cane was sold at, and the first year of the reduction was in 1887, and then it came down as low as 6s. 6d.? No; I was not aware of it. I did not know Mr. Hodgkinson. I was not present at any of his meetings, and I do not remember his being here at all.

(At Rockholme Plantation, Coomera.)

SAMUEL GRIMES examined:

9365. *By the Chairman:* What is the name of your place? Rockholme, on the Coomera River.

9366. What experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar? Some twenty-two years' experience in growing sugar. I first planted cane on September 9th, 1867.

9367. Has your experience been entirely confined to Queensland? Yes.

9368. What is the total area of land you hold here? 1,550 acres.

9369. How much is under cultivation? I suppose about 260 acres of it.

9370. How much is under cane? About 120 acres.

9371. What are the areas of the other crops? 52 acres arrowroot, 50 acres maize, sweet potatoes, and a quantity of turnips, and bananas, and about 40 or 50 acres lying fallow waiting for next season. We are stumping that part of the estate. Up to a short time ago we had about 400 or 500 acres of land in cultivation at Oxley. That is now let on lease, and I am now carrying on my cultivation at the Coomera.

9372. Sugar is not grown at Oxley? No; not now.

9373. How many acres of cane did you crush last season? About 80 acres were crushed last year.

9374. How many tons of cane to the acre did you realise? I suppose it would run (I made 72 tons of sugar off the lot) to 16 tons of cauetoa ton of sugar. The crop was late in growing, and the density was not very high, and it was frosted and that cut down the returns a good deal.

9375. Could you state the number of tons of cane altogether? 1,156 tons of cane.

9376. What price did you get for your sugar? It averaged £17 a ton for firsts, seconds, and thirds.

9377. How

S. Grimes.

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- S. Grimes. 9377. How much molasses did you have? I have taken no note of the quantity of molasses. Just what is usual.
- 20 Mar., 1889. 9378. How did you dispose of it? We consumed it on the plantation. We gave it to the horses, cows, and pigs.
9379. What is the total amount of capital invested in the plantation? £12,000 on this estate.
9380. And what rate of interest did that return to you last season? I could hardly answer that question put in that way, because a good deal of money has been expended on improvements for next year. It would be hardly fair to reply to the question put in that way; it might tend to mislead.
9381. Was there any profit on your plantation last year outside of your working expenses? Yes. I thought it would be best to tell you the cost of producing sugar, and my profit can be calculated from that. The cost of cultivation is £3 per ton of sugar. The cutting costs £2 per ton of sugar. All the cutting is done by contract at 2s. 6d. a ton. The carting cost 17s. 4d., and the making of the sugar in the mill £2 8s. a ton. Then bagging, freight, &c., costs 15s. a ton. Then there is the interest on the money expended on the plantation. I calculate that, taking all the plantation works together, they represent somewhere about £35 an acre for every acre under cane. Take interest on that at 7 per cent. would be £2 9s. That would bring the total cost of sugar up to £11 9s. or £11 10s. in round numbers. Of course those figures would fluctuate somewhat. If I had a good crop of cane the cost of cultivation would be less in proportion. If I had a very bad season for carting—the ground is boggy—the cost of carting would be considerably increased. Then the cost of working in the mill may be increased by low density of cane and the cane being badly frosted, so that this price would fluctuate somewhat, but not very much. But I have given you what would be an average season.
9382. Then any profit that you made would be the difference between the £11 10s. and the £17? Yes.
9383. That is apart from the further improvement of your plantation? Yes.
9384. What were your working expenses for 1883? £20.20 This includes labour in clearing, draining, and other permanent improvements done during the off season.
9385. Does that sum include interest? No; it does not include interest; it is working expenses alone.
9386. What labour is employed in working the plantation? Europeans only.
9387. How many of them? Sometimes I have as many as sixty on the place during crushing time when crushing cane and grinding arrowroot are in full swing. I can't confine my answer to sugar without the arrowroot, because they are worked together. I have been working the sugar by day, and grinding the arrowroot by night. Taking the average for the year through it would be from twenty-five to twenty-seven men.
- 9387A. What rate of wages do you pay for Europeans? 15s. a week and rations for ordinary men. Ploughmen get a little more. I count that the cost of the men with board would be about 24s. a week.
9388. Of course you pay skilled workmen, such as engineers and sugar boilers, more. A sugar boiler gets 10s. a day. I employ him during the season. The engineer gets £1 18s. a week and his rations and a cottage.
9389. Can you get as much labour as you require for the plantation? Yes. I have never been short of labour.
9390. Are the Europeans fit and suitable for the work? Yes. I have found no difficulty at all in getting them to do the work.
9391. Have they ever complained that the work was unsuited for them? No, I have had no complaints of that kind. I have no difficulty in getting ten hours a day of work from the Europeans. I have had to vary their hours on account of the extreme heat of the sun at midday. They have gone out early in the morning, and taken a rest for about three hours in the middle of the day, and worked again in the evening.
9392. Was that a suggestion from the men or was it your own? I suggested it to them, and they offered no objection to it. That was during January and February, the two hottest months in the year.
9393. Is the health of the men good here? Yes.
9394. Is the island scrub land or forest? Partly both.
9395. What has it cost per acre for felling and burning off? A portion I did by day labour, and I let a contract for a portion of it at £5 10s. an acre. That is to leave the stumps in.
9396. What does it cost to stump and leave it fit for the plough? If it was stumped right off it would cost £15 or £16 an acre. But if we plant cane on it and allow it to remain over for four years we can stump it for £2 an acre by day labour. Say an average of about £2 10s.
9397. Then cane planting amongst stumps will have to be done entirely by hoe? Yes.
9398. The weeding also? After the second year we can work with a small American grubber. I have one.
9399. Do Europeans ever offer any objection to hoe work? None whatever.
9400. Are you sufficiently satisfied with European labour to continue the growing of cane with it? Yes.
9401. You have no intention of abandoning the cultivation of sugar? No.
9402. Do you intend to extend your operations? Yes; I put in a fresh area last planting season, and intend to put in another next year.
9403. What was the cost of your machinery in the sugar mill? It cost £3,800 free on board in Glasgow, and the erection and additions have brought it up to £5,000.
9404. By Mr. King: Is all your cultivated land under the plough? Not all of it. The fresh areas have still to be worked with the hoe.
9405. Was the cane that you crushed stand-over cane, or cane of a year's growth only? A ratoon crop only.
9406. Do you usually crush cane of a year old, or crush it stand over? The first planted cane I allow to stand over till the second year, unless it is caught too heavily with the frost, when I cut it.
9407. But the ratoons you cut every year? Yes.
9408. What was the average crops of cane last year? Eighteen tons of cane.
9409. Do you trash your cane? No.
9410. Do you consider that the cultivation of cane, including planting and weeding, only costs £3 a ton? The ordinary weeding does not cost me £3 a ton; but the first crop of plant cane is extra work, and the average cost of first plant cane, and three crops of ratoons would be about £3. First plant cane does not cost me anything for cultivation the second year if I allow it to stand over; it does not require weeding at all.
9411. When

9411. When you have cut your cane you plough between your rows? Yes; I plough as close as I can to the cane, and men with a hoe just go in between the stools.
9412. And how often do they have to weed? About twice.
9413. Can that be done for £4 a ton? Yes; that is what it cost me last year.
9414. How do you get your sugar to Brisbane? By cutter.
9415. What does it cost for transit? 8s. a ton.
9416. What reduction has to be made on account of commission charges from the price of the sugar? The £17 I get for sugar is the net return. I pay the freight. I deliver it at the wharf, Brisbane, and they take charge of it there. My sugar is sold exactly the same way as any sugar in the north. It is sent to the commission agents. There is an impression that our sugar is sold retail over the counter. There is not 1lb. of my sugar sold in that way.
9417. Have your men ever struck for increased wages at crushing time? No.
9418. What kind of labour do you employ? All kinds. Germans, Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen. All kinds excepting coloured labour. They would not consort with Europeans.
9419. *By Mr. Couley:* What was the value of the other crops you grew last year—what did they net you? The arrowroot would be £700 and the rest of the crops would be consumed on the place.
9420. What does it cost you to plant cane per acre? If I had to plant it on newly-cleared scrub land, it would cost from 30s. to £2. That is after falling and burning off.
9421. That £3 for cultivation does not include this? Yes, it would include that. But the stand-over crop, the crop that is two years old, does not cost anything for cultivation the second year. The average is £3 a year with four ratoon crops and one plant crop.
9422. What does it cost to plant the ploughed land? Well, it would cost I suppose, about 15s. an acre.
9423. Does that include the cost of the plants? The plants only cost the labour of cutting.
9424. How many times do you plough your land before planting? Only one ploughing, and then a good harrowing and drilling.
9425. Can you do all that for 15s. an acre? Yes.
9426. The ploughing will cost you from 10s. to 15s. per acre getting ready for planting, and then there is the drilling, cutting, carting, placing the plants, and covering them. Does all that only cost 15s. an acre? Yes.
9427. Do you include the cost of weeding in the £3? Yes.
9428. Do you get your holes made by contract or by day work? Day work.
9429. How many holes does a man make in a day? I could not tell you.
9430. Would he make a hundred? I can't tell. I can give you the cost of the whole of this first patch of cane. It was £7 an acre for the first planting, that is burning and clearing off and everything.
9431. What is the total amount of capital sunk in this place, not in machinery alone? £12,000.
9432. What interest do you pay on it, or what is a fair interest to allow on it? 7 per cent. I am not paying that on it. Fortunately I have no need to pay interest. I could get money at 7 per cent. if I wanted it.
9433. And you allow your men to rest for three hours in the middle of the day? I do.
9434. And if you were crushing? I have all my crushing finished before Christmas.
9435. But is it hot before Christmas? No; there is no difficulty before Christmas, and it is only this year, between January and February, that I have adopted this system.
9436. Then you did not allow the three hours in the middle of the day before? No; this has been an exceptionally hot season.
9437. You say that you do not trash your cane; tell us why? I don't trash. I find no advantage in trashing.
9438. Not even in the cost of cutting? No.
9439. Can you cut as cheaply without trashing as with trashing? The contractors make very little difference between trashed and untrashed cane. That is the cane I have now. Some years ago I tested the question of trashing. I set aside a field of cane and divided it into two equal parts, and trashed one half and let the other half alone, and then judged the result as they passed through the mill; and I found that while we were losing the value of the trashing—the cost of it—we gained nothing whatever as far as the result was concerned. I came to the conclusion that trashing made no difference. I was then growing ribbon cane, which cost us from 30s. to £2 an acre to trash.
9440. Was there no difference in the density of the juice? Yes; but there was a short supply of juice in the trashed cane. There was no difference in the result produced.
9441. How often did you trash that cane? Twice.
9442. How long before it was cut? Sometime before cutting. The first trashing would be somewhere about four months before cutting, and the other about two months.
9443. How old was the cane?—Was it a stand-over crop? The plants the year that we made the test?
9444. Yes? It was plant cane—a stand-over crop.
9445. What was the average tonnage of that crop to the acre? It is so long ago that I cannot tell you. I know there was no difference in the sugar obtained.
9446. Do you purchase cane from the farmers? No.
9447. Do you wish to buy? I am not anxious to buy.
- 9447a. You have not tried to get the farmers to sell? No.
9448. You said that your men had never struck at any time for higher wages? Not at the time of cane crushing.
9449. Have they ever done so? The only occasion that I remember when they struck for higher wages was when I was making a dam and digging reservoirs in connection with the mill.
9450. As a rule, are the men perfectly contented to do work for 15s. a week? Yes.
9451. Do they remain with you long? Yes.
9452. They are not constantly changing? No.
9453. They seem to be thoroughly contented with their lot and are able to do the work? Yes. I have some ordinary labourers who have been on the place now for six years. Some have been here over that time; some have been here ten years. My engineer has just started in a place of his own, and he was with me eighteen years.

- S. Grimes. 9454. What do you pay per ton for cutting your cane? 2s. 6d.
 9455. What was the cost of cartage? The cartage for a fair season would be 1s. 2d. per ton.
 20 Mar., 1889. 9456. What kind of sugar bags do you use? The large size.
 9457. 4-bushel? No.
 9458. 70 lb.? No; they will go 96 lb.
 9459. Are they bags or mats? Bags.
 9460. What do they cost you per dozen? 3s. 3d. to 3s. 6d.
 9461. What is the largest quantity of sugar you have made here? 200 tons.
 9462. How long ago? Three years ago.
 9463. What did you make during the intermediate seasons? We have not planted since, and the crop has been gradually ploughed out, and other crops put in.
 9464. How much sugar did you make the year after? 150 tons, the next year 120 tons, and last year 80 tons.
 9465. How do you account for the great falling off? The falling off is in this way. When we have seen that it was not giving us good returns we have ploughed it out and put in other crops that did better, and the low price of sugar prevented me from planting afresh until last year. It was after the price rose that I planted more.
 9466. How much did you plant last year? Thirty or forty acres.
 9467. Will that crush next year? I do not think it will.
 9468. What is the capacity of your mill? 20 tons a week of dry sugar.
 9469. Do you intend to plant till you can work it at its full capacity? Yes.
 9470. Why did you give up growing sugar at Oxley? The machinery we had at Oxley was very ordinary machinery, and we could not make a sample of sugar that would sell. There was no inducement held out to us by the farmers to put up better machinery, and as land was getting very valuable out there we thought it desirable to move further out and get really good machinery, and make sugar fit for the altered market.
 9471. And you are perfectly satisfied with the outlook even at the rate that you are going on now? I am not perfectly satisfied. I would be satisfied if I could reach £20 a ton. A good thing could be made out of it then.
 9472. But are you satisfied with the profits you made last year? No; I am not satisfied with them.
 9473. *By the Chairman*: Can you tell us what, in your opinion, are the causes of the present depression in the sugar industry? I take the chief cause to be the low price of sugar, in consequence of the bounty system. That is, the reduction in the price of sugar is one cause. I think that other things have contributed to make the depression still worse, by the great want of confidence the capitalists seem to have in the sugar industry all through.
 9474. What do you think has brought about that want of confidence? Well, they seem to have given up all hope of one thing, viz., that sugar will rise. The shareholders in those large companies want dividends. They are not satisfied to allow the profit to be spent in improving their property, and not receive dividends. They are curtailing expenditure in every possible way, and by that means are increasing the cost of the sugar that is made on the plantation. In most cases the mills are able to crush four and five times the amount of cane they have in cultivation. That is what I have seen in the North.
 9475. *By Mr. Cowley*: Four or five times? Yes.
 9476. *By the Chairman*: Can you give us any suggestion whereby the industry can be relieved from its present depression? I will just make another remark with reference to the depression. The depression has been followed by the cry that sugar growers are going to be ruined, because they have not a sufficient supply of labour. That has a tendency to shake the confidence of capitalists in the sugar industry also. Now, I am not prepared to offer any suggestion as to how that can be altered. At the same time it is evident that prices are improving, and I think there is a very good prospect before the sugar growers of Queensland.
 9477. Are you in any way disheartened with your present prospects? No.
 9478. *By Mr. Cowley*: But are not the southern mill-owners situated the same way as the northern men by having mills four and five times larger than they have cane for them to crush? No.
 9479. Yourself, for instance. You could make 500 tons of sugar, and only make 72 tons; or, even if you worked at night, you could make 1,000 tons instead of 72 tons? But I cannot work the sugar mill at night. I work the arrowroot at night and the mill during the day.
 9480. But that does not lower the full capacity of the mill? The capacity of the mill is calculated by ten hours a day. That is 20 tons a week.
 9481. Are you not aware that some of the mills up North make 2,000 tons of sugar in a season? Some of them do.
 9482. And do you not know that some of them work day and night? I was not aware of it.
 9483. Then when you make those remarks your experience is limited with regard to the way the mills are worked up North? Possibly it may be; but I judged from what I saw when I was up North, and by the reports giving the number of days that the mills were working about Mackay, and by the reports in the papers that we have seen.
 9484. Did they alststate the cause why they could not get enough cane for the mill? As far as a good many of the Mackay plantations are concerned, especially those on the mountain ridges, I saw from the beginning that they could only just last a few years. They could not grow cane on that land for many years. It is different with level fields. There are large areas of land under cane in Mackay on the mountain slopes, in the mountain scrubs.
 9485. Then, in making those remarks, you confine yourself to Mackay? The same remarks would apply to some of the Cairns scrubs. There is a wasteful system of working plantations. I refer to burning all the megass and returning nothing to the soil. That is bound to impoverish the soil and the crops will suffer in time.
 9486. But don't you think that where fuel is scarce it is better to burn megass and spend the money thus saved in artificial manure, as some planters are doing? They will find that the artificial manure they get is very expensive.

9487. Are

9487. Are you not aware that sugar in Mauritius is grown entirely by artificial manure, and has been for 100 years? It may be. S. Grimes.
 9488. And that the bulk of the sugar is grown without a plough being put into the land? But the crops have been falling off in Mauritius for the last few years. 20 Mar., 1889.

ARTHUR ANTHONY ROBINSON examined :

9489. *By the Chairman* : What is the name of your plantation? Hellensvale.
 9490. How many years have you been growing sugar? Since 1870.
 9491. Are you growing sugar now? No; not much.
 9492. What is the total area of the land held by you? There are 1,280 acres in the estate.
 9493. How many acres are under cultivation? 300.
 9494. How many were under cultivation by sugar? I had 300 under cane at one time.
 9495. When was your last crushing? I had a few tons last year.
 9496. How many did you crush last year? Forty acres. I made 36 tons of sugar.
 9497. What amount of capital is invested in the estate? About £35,000 since the beginning.
 9498. Has it at any time yielded sufficient to pay the interest at all? Yes; when the prices were high. We were making large crops and getting £30 per ton for the sugar at that time.
 9499. When you say large crops, what do you mean? Between 300 and 400 tons of sugar a year for two years.
 9500. What were your working expenses? That is a very hard question, because I employed only kanakas, excepting ploughmen and engineers. The working expenses were £1,500 a year at least.
 9501. What labour did you employ? Islanders mostly.
 9502. How many had you? I had an average of fifty all the year round.
 9503. And how many Europeans? About ten altogether.
 9504. What was the reason that you had to abandon sugar growing? Too much money spent in machinery, the failure of the seasons, and the want of capital, and capital being withdrawn at a critical time (which was very likely for the best, seeing that the seasons have turned out so bad), were the causes of my abandoning sugar growing. If you do not look to the future, if you are constantly laying all your strength on the present, and forgetting the year that is to come, you are done at once on a sugar plantation.
 9505. What was the cost of your machinery? About £12,000 altogether, from first to last.
 9506. Have you any further intention of going into sugar again? No.
 9507. *By Mr. King* : Is sugar growing in this district generally decreasing or increasing? Decreasing very much.
 9508. What is the reason for its decreasing? I think the reason is because of the low price of sugar, and certainly the dry seasons have done more to destroy the industry than anything else. The low prices have been helped by the extraordinary seasons down here.
 9509. Did you try to grow sugar with white labour in the field? No; except ploughmen. I always had white ploughmen. I had some experience last year of white men in the crushing season.
 9510. From your experience as a planter do you think that it would be possible to grow cane profitably with white labour alone? I think it might be done here now that labour is so cheap. You might make a living out of it by employing them by contract—by doing everything by contract—because labour is so very plentiful. There is no difficulty in procuring labourers about here now.
 9511. Would you go in for sugar planting if you had to work it with white labour alone? No; I would not do it. I would sooner go in for any other ordinary work. I would prefer to go in for hay growing; it would not cause so much anxious labour.
 9512. *By the Chairman* : You think that the low price of sugar and the disastrous seasons are responsible for the depression in the sugar industry? Yes.
 9513. *By Mr. King* : Has not loss of confidence on the part of capitalists something to do with it? Yes. Sugar, except in a few favoured parts, is done. I do not think it can be done by white labour. The only chance in the north of the colony of doing anything is by assisting the planters up North in the direction of providing them with cheaper labour. It has never been done in any other part of the world, and I do not see how it is to be done here. In the West Indies and other tropical countries the white population is dying out every day. Sugar growing has never been properly carried out in these colonies as it has been elsewhere.

A. A.
Robinson.

20 Mar., 1889.

WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH, 1889.

LOGAN DISTRICT.

(At Southport.)

PRESENT :

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. | H. E. KING, Esq.
A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

DAVID YOUNG FULLARTON examined :

9514. *By the Chairman* : You are the owner of Bundall Plantation? Yes.
 9515. How many acres does it consist of? 2,500 acres.
 9516. How many acres have you planted in sugar? 200 acres.
 9517. When did you crush for the last time? Last year.
 9518. *By Mr. King* : 1888 or 1887? 1888.
 9519. *By the Chairman* : How many acres did you crush? 100 acres.
 9520. What amount of sugar did you obtain? 25 tons.
 9521. What was the cause of the lowness of the crop? Drought principally. 9522. What

D. Y.
Fullarton.

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- D. Y.
Fullarton.
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9522. What labour did you employ? Mixed—kanaka and white.
 9523. Were the islanders indentured or time-expired boys? Both.
 9524. Did you make any attempt to grow sugar entirely with white labour? No.
 9525. What was the cause of you abandoning the growth of sugar? I could not make it pay expenses.
 9526. Even with coloured labour? Even with coloured labour.
 9527. Have you any intention of returning to the growth of sugar? None whatever. I think the failure lately has been due to the change of climate during the last seven years, from a moist to a dry climate.
 9529. Have you in previous years grown sugar profitably? I never made a profit, only paid expenses. It did not show a profit even when we had the high prices.
 9529. *By Mr. King*: What is the value of your machinery? Do you mean cost price?
 9530. What did it cost you erected on the ground? £3,000.
 9531. Is the machinery still on the plantation? Yes.
 9532. Do you expect to turn it to some account? Only by selling it all.
 9533. Are you cultivating the land in any other way? Yes; general farming.
 9534. What crops do you grow now? Chiefly maize, just at present.
 9535. Do you find that that pays better than sugar? Infinitely better.
 9536. It is generally thought that sugar stands the drought better than other crops. Is that your opinion? It all depends when it gets the drought, I think. If rain does not come when you have cut the ratoons they will not start, and winter is on them before they make any headway again.
 9537. Perhaps the construction of the railway to Southport has had something to do with the change of crops. Do you find it more profitable now that you have railway communication with Brisbane? Yes; that has a great deal to do with it. Freight is only half what it was.
 9538. Are there any other plantations in the district? Only Muir's.
 9539. Have they abandoned the cultivation of sugar? Yes; two years ago.
 9540. Then in your part of the district sugar growing is apparently dying out? It has died right out.
 9541. And you do not think it is likely to be renewed, no matter how it is encouraged? I am sure it will not. I think it is a mistake in this part of the country altogether.
 9542. Why do you say "in this part of the country"? Because we never got the yield they talk about in other places.
 9543. Do you suffer from frost at all? Not much.
 9544. *By Mr. Cowley*: Did you work your mill as a central factory? No; there was nobody there to grow cane.
 9545. Are you isolated there? Our cultivation is in the middle of our own place, and the nearest neighbour would be three miles away.
 9546. What labour are you employing now in general farming? White. There are two agreement boys whose time wants a few months to finish. It will be white labour entirely.

CHARLES HUMPHREY PHILLIPS examined:

- C. H.
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9547. *By the Chairman*: Are you the owner of Burib Plantation? Part owner.
 9548. How many acres does it consist of? Between 900 and 1,000 acres, of which sixty were under sugar cane.
 9549. When did you last crush? Five years ago, I think.
 9550. How many acres did you crush then? I do not think we crushed more than thirty acres; we left a lot of it standing.
 9551. What quantity of sugar did you turn out? I can't give it exactly. Do you want the average per acre?
 9552. Yes? It is so long ago that I can't think of it. I suppose it would average about $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons to the acre.
 9553. What labour did you employ when cultivating sugar cane? Chiefly white labour. For many years we did not use anything but white labour. We had only two years of black labour.
 9554. What was your reason for abandoning sugar cane? The extremely low price of sugar.
 9555. You have now gone into other agriculture? Yes. We have at present turned our machinery into a saw-mill.
 9556. What did it cost you? The sugar mill?
 9557. Yes? That is a difficult question to answer, because we improved, and improved, and improved it. Without going into the thing too closely, I should say that about £5,000 was sunk in the plantation. That is in cultivation as well as machinery.
 9558. How much of the £5,000 would your machinery represent? Roughly, I should think £1,500.
 9559. Have you disposed of any of it since? No.
 9560. Were others growing cane round you at the time? Immediately close to us?
 9561. Yes? No; not at that time.
 9562. Are the farmers round you growing cane, or have they abandoned it? Yes; they will have nothing to do with growing it. It is not grown within three miles of my place.
 9563. And you have no intention of going into sugar again? No.
 9564. *By Mr. King*: Did sugar growing pay you at all when you were engaged in it? Did you ever make it pay? Taking an average—taking one season with another—it never did.
 9565. What number of men did you employ when you were growing sugar? During the crushing season twenty. Of course the number would vary, sometimes a man or two less, and sometimes a man or two more.
 9566. Were they principally white men whom you employed? Yes; we only employed islanders during the last two years we had sugar, and they were all time-expired boys. We never indentured any from the islands.
 9567. What made you employ islanders for the past two years? Owing to the insufficiency of white labour, and the unreliability of it.
 9568. Did you have any difficulty in getting cultivation done by white men? No. Do you mean in getting the number of men?
 9569. What had you to complain of with the white men? You could never depend on the white men doing the same thing twice. One day they would work well, and the next day they would do comparatively little.
 9570. Did

9570. Did they ever strike with you? No.

9571. Did they dislike the work—is that what made them unreliable? They did dislike it, but not because it was that class of labour, but simply because they disliked work of any kind.

9572. Then it makes no difference to you whether the Legislature does anything for the sugar growers or not, you would not try it down here again? It would be impossible to try it on a small scale, as there is too much waste in manipulation.

C. H.
Phillipot.

20 Mar., 1889.

FRIDAY, 22 MARCH, 1889.

(At Brisbane.)

PRESENT:

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A. |

H. E. KING, Esq.

A. S. COWLEY, Esq., M.L.A.

W. H. GROOM, Esq., M.L.A., IN THE CHAIR.

ARTHUR WOODWARD examined:

9573. *By the Chairman:* Are you Polynesian inspector? I am officer in charge of Pacific Island Immigration.

9574. Are you in direct communication with the various inspectors of Polynesians throughout the colony? Yes.

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9575. Are you regularly furnished with reports from their respective districts? Yes.

9576. How many Polynesians are at present in the colony? I can give you the number on 31st December, if that will be sufficient for you. It is an estimate, but it is pretty reliable.

9577. *By Mr. Cowley:* Could you not give us the actual number in the colony on 31st December? Not the actual number, but an estimate.

9578. *By the Chairman:* Supply us with the estimated number? This estimate is prepared from schedules prepared by the inspectors of the respective district up to 31st December, 1888. The total is 7,580. I can give you the separate numbers in each district if you wish. There are of course a large number of islanders in the colony of whom we have no cognisance. Some men engage and make no agreements. A great many of them are exempt.

9579. Then those that hold tickets of exemption are not under the control of the inspectors under the Act? No, they are not; but they ought to be under supervision. They have been under the supervision of the inspectors at one time, but have passed from it, and until they make an agreement they will not come under it again. It is not compulsory on the Polynesians to make an agreement, but the law says that a planter shall not work them without an agreement. The number, 7,580, contains the estimated number that each inspector had reason to believe were—what the islanders term—"walking about" in his district.

9580. When the Commission was at Port Douglas, evidence was submitted to the effect that the islanders who had been employed on Bribrri had not been paid their wages for eighteen months previous to the insolvency of the proprietor.—Have these facts been brought under your knowledge? Yes.

9581. Have any steps been taken to enforce payment? It was my impression that payment could not be enforced, because the trustee had no funds to do so with. We have been waiting for the sale of the estate. I have all the names of the islanders, and know as far as possible where they all are. Some have re-engaged in other parts of the colony, but I think I can place all of them.

9582. How did it happen that such a long time was allowed to run on without their wages being paid to them? Neglect of the officer whose duty it was to see that this payment of wages was periodically made.

9583. But do not those inspectors see that the wages are paid every six months? They are instructed to do so under the Act.

9584. Do they not report non-payment of wages to you when wages are not paid every six months? It is their duty to do so, but if they do not the fact does not come before me at all.

9585. Then you do not know if those inspectors are doing their duty—you do not know if they report everything to you or not? No.

9586. When were you made aware of the fact that the islanders who should have been paid every six months had not been paid for eighteen months? When the plantation went insolvent. I blame Major Funning very much for not informing me of the matter. He had the agreements of the boys in his office, and the proprietors of the plantation should have had notice given them that the money was due.

9587. Are you aware that those islanders are walking about Port Douglas, and refuse to re-engage until they have been paid what is due to them? Some of them are, and others have gone to Mackay.

9588. Then the attention of the Government has been officially drawn to it? Yes.

9589. But I mean has the attention of the Government been drawn to the fact that these islanders, who should have been paid every six months, had not been paid for eighteen months? I hardly follow the question.

9590. Has the attention of the Government been called to the fact that those islanders were not paid every six months as they should have been, or has attention just been drawn to the fact that they have not been paid at all? To the fact that they have not been paid at all.

9591. Are you not aware that there is an Act of Parliament under which if a mortgagee takes possession of a place, he can be forced to pay six months' wages to the servants engaged on such place? No.

9592. Have you not put in force that Act? I was not aware of it. I thought three months was the time wages could be paid for as preferential debts.

9593. Then, practically, you are unable to give the Commission any evidence at all as to why those men have not been paid? I can hardly say that. I made an official complaint against Major Fanning for not reporting non-payment of wages to me when they should have been paid.

9594. But

- A. Woodward. 9594. But the fact of having made an official complaint against Major Fanning is no answer to the question why you did not get a portion of the wages due from the mortgagee? I informed the men who were due the money that I was endeavouring to obtain the money from the trustee of the estate.
- 22 Mar., 1899. 9595. But the estate had no funds.—But it is expected that they will have considerable funds when the plantation is sold? Even if they sell the plantation at a heavy loss on the present value, there will be a considerable sum to divide.
9596. Do you know anything about a colony of Polynesians that are located at North Rockhampton? No.
9597. And who have horses and drays, and are competing with white men by cutting and selling firewood? No; I am not aware of it.
9598. Has any report of the kind been furnished to you? No.
9599. And you are in total ignorance of it? I am.
9600. Are you aware that in the Bundaberg district there are 300 time-expired boys walking about, and who have formed a settlement on a town reserve, and who sometimes become a nuisance to the people in the neighbourhood, and frequently insult females who have to pass that way? No.
9601. Are you aware of a disturbance which took place in January last on the Norton Gold Field, between white men and kanakas? No.
9602. Did you hear that a gold-mining company had a considerable number of kanakas working for them at Norton? Complaints have been made during the last three years that there were islanders working at that goldfield, and it was brought before the Minister several times.
9603. Did you not hear of the disturbance last January on the Norton Gold Field, between the whites and the kanakas, in which the whites rose and drove the kanakas by force off the field? No.
9604. Do the inspectors send you reports regularly of what transpires in their districts with regard to these men? Only in cases of difficulty that they want to have an opinion or decision upon.
9605. How often do they furnish you with reports? There is no fixed time for making their reports.
9606. Then how are you to find out whether the Pacific Island inspector discharges his duty in visiting the plantations in his district, or not in order to find out if there are any grievances, or if the men are treated properly? We have no power of knowing under the present circumstances.
9607. Then, in point of fact, these men could do exactly as they pleased, and you would not be aware of what they were doing? They might.
9608. Do you not think you should receive quarterly reports? Yes; it would be a very good thing; but it would be an addition to the many and onerous duties which I have already to perform, and which more than occupy my time.
9609. But you would not be called on to read all those reports yourself. Your assistants could read them, and when necessary call your attention to anything important in them? That would involve a terrible amount of additional labour upon me to have to investigate all those reports, because they would contain a great variety of important matters which would require my individual attention if they were to be of any value.
9610. But don't you see the position in which you are placed. In January last a number of kanakas are illegally employed on a goldfield, and this is resented by the white men working there, and they rise up and forcibly turn the kanakas off the field. This causes a disturbance. That is how it was reported in the papers here, and yet you, as officer in charge of the department, do not know anything about it. If Parliament were to inquire into this matter, you would be the first officer called on to explain what you knew of the matter? That goldfield lies beyond the limits of the Polynesian district, and the inspectors have nothing to do with what occurs beyond the bounds of their district.
9611. Are you furnished with reports as to the amount of money placed in the savings bank to the credit of the islanders by the inspectors? Yes.
9612. Have they any difficulty in obtaining their money from the bank, that you are aware of? No; I do not think so. The inspectors get the money from the bank for them.
9613. Have you not heard that the kanakas complain that they have great difficulty in obtaining money from the savings bank? No; never.
9614. Have you heard that many kanakas prefer to lodge their money with storekeepers, and even with Chinamen, rather than place it in the savings bank owing to the difficulty of withdrawing it? If they do it is only a question of preference; it is not because there is any difficulty in withdrawing their money from the savings bank. They do so in Brisbane. I know of several storekeepers to whom the kanakas give their money, but it is only because they prefer doing so.
9615. If an islander dies with an amount of money to his credit in the savings bank, what is done with it? It becomes, according to certain sections of the Act, the property of the Pacific Islanders Fund.
9616. But in the event of a relative of the deceased applying for it, what happens? Then the case is inquired into, and if it is a good one the facts are placed before the Minister and his sanction obtained for paying the money.
9617. Would the Chief Secretary or yourself be the arbitrator in such cases? The Minister. Certain papers have to be filled up and certain facts ascertained before the sanction can be obtained.
9618. Have you known cases where a deceased islander's relatives have been refused the money which he left? Yes; very many of these cases come before me.
9619. Have you known any very serious case of this kind come before you? No; none of any moment.
9620. Are all deaths reported to you by the inspectors? It is the law and the rule that they should be.
9621. I was informed of the death of a female kanaka last week on a plantation in the Coomera district. Have you been informed of it? I do not think that any such report has reached me during the last few days. I am sure I have not received such a report during the last few days. Sometimes there is a little delay in sending in these reports.
9622. In this case she left an infant a fortnight old. I was going to ask you the cause of her death, and whether she had received proper medical treatment during her confinement? The report of a death is required by law to be accompanied by a medical certificate, and in cases where such certificate cannot be obtained, an inquiry is held under the Act of Parliament.
9623. By Mr. King: Is it not the law that any persons employing kanakas except under an agreement entered into before an inspector are liable to a penalty? Yes; unless the islander is exempt.

A.
Woodward.
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9624. Is it not a fact that there are numbers of islanders who are constantly taking employment without any agreement being entered into before an officer of the department? Yes; the law is very flagrantly violated in that respect. We do the best we can to control it, and send notices of warning to the employers. But the law is flagrantly violated, even by officials high up in the public service.

9625. Have you taken any steps to prosecute the offenders? No, I have not. If I once commenced, it would take up the whole of my time, which is already over-burdened, and I would require to employ a staff of detectives.

9626. But are you aware that by this action they are defrauding the last employer of the £5 which he paid for return passage money? Yes; and most unjustly. That is a thing that I feel very sorely on.

9627. Do you not consider that it is part of the duty of the inspector to see that the law is properly carried out? They do their best, I really believe.

9628. Do any of the agreements which have been made before the inspectors show that any kanakas are employed on any goldfields? No.

9629. Then any kanaka employed on a goldfield must be illegally employed? Undoubtedly, unless the kanakas are exempt.

9630. And the employer liable to a penalty under the Act? Yes.

9631. When you heard of those agreements with Conran and Co., did you not give instructions to prosecute the parties who were employing the kanakas illegally? I can hardly charge my memory with what transpired at that time. It is a considerable time ago and must extend back three years. But I would point out that Conran and Co. were beyond the range of any Polynesian inspector's district.

9632. Were they beyond the range of the Polynesian Act?—Is not anyone in Queensland liable to a penalty for employing islanders illegally? Yes.

9633. Is it not the duty of the department to prosecute in such cases, and to see that the Act is carried into effect? No; no actions are entered into without the sanction of the Minister having been obtained first.

9634. Have any cases been brought before the Minister of kanakas having been employed without an agreement, and his instructions acted upon? Many cases have been brought before the Minister with a request for sanction to prosecute.

9635. With what result? In some cases there have been prosecutions, and in other cases warnings have been given.

9636. Are you aware that in the Cairns district the Polynesians working on the plantations are not allowed by the Polynesian inspector to have their wages until the end of the three years for which they are indentured? I became aware of it a few days ago, much to my surprise.

9637. The action of the inspector was not authorised by the department? Most unauthorised. I have written very strongly to him about it.

9638. Has it come under your notice that there are any increased difficulties in getting Polynesians from the islands? No; I do not think there is any difficulty.

9639. It is alleged that one of the reasons for the very high passage money charged is the risk attending the business of bringing them here. Are you aware that a good many ships have come back almost, if not entirely, empty? No; certainly not.

9640. If an accident should happen to a Government agent the vessel is bound to return, even if she should be entirely empty. Is such not the case? Yes, if it was such an accident that he could not perform his duties in consequence thereof.

9641. Then an accident to a Government agent might entail the loss of the whole of the expenses of the voyage? It might. It would be the same if an accident happened to the captain or any other important officer.

9642. Have any suggestions been made to the department for employing extra Government agents so as to avoid such a contingency? No. In one case two Government agents were sent with a steamer to facilitate the work of recruiting. The experiment was not a satisfactory one and has not been repeated.

9643. How was it unsatisfactory? The two Government agents disagreed with each other.

9644. With regard to the money left by deceased islanders, have not their relatives very great difficulty in obtaining it? No, not for a just claim.

9645. What do you mean by a just claim? If they are really the persons they represent themselves to be, and come sufficiently near within the range of kinship.

9646. In dealing with these questions do you take into consideration their tribal customs? No.

9647. You recognise simply the same law of succession that prevails amongst white men? No; we do not go so far as that. We define the relationships as husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, and brother and brother. We do not go into such relationships as those of cousins even.

9648. Have you ever heard of the case of a woman dying and leaving some money, and the department refusing to allow the money to be spent for the benefit of her child? I cannot charge my memory with it, but I can have the case looked up.

9649. Has the department ever refused payment of a deceased islander's money to his brother on the ground that there required to be proof that he was the only brother? That might have been the cause of delay in settlement.

9650. Do you not think that this method of dealing with the money of deceased islanders is probably one reason why they prefer to entrust their money to Chinamen and other storekeepers instead of putting it in the Savings Bank? Possibly it may.

9651. Have the inspectors instructions to look sharply after people who supply the kanakas with grog, and to prevent their being supplied with liquor? I believe they do their very best in that respect.

9652. Can you tell us the amount of the Pacific Islanders' Fund at the present time? On the 31st December, 1888, the amount to the credit of the fund was £11,596 5s. 5d.

9653. Are you aware that in Bundaberg there are two missionaries working amongst the kanakas, giving them religious instruction, and conducting services for them in the churches? I have no official knowledge of it, but I believe that such is the case.

9654. Has any assistance been given for the instruction of the kanakas, or to the missionaries engaged in attending to them out of the Pacific Islanders' Fund? No.

9655. Don't you think that some portion of that fund ought to be applied to that purpose? I do not think so.

9656. Well,

A. Woodward, 9656. Well, according to your own showing, that fund is composed of money left by the kanakas themselves. Such being the case, could it be employed more properly than in providing for their religious instruction? But that is a proposal I am not prepared to give an official answer to. It is a matter of private opinion. I do not think that any portion of the fund could be legally set aside for their religious instruction.

22 Mar., 1889. 9657. Then the department does not in any way assist any of the schools or establishments or missionaries working amongst the kanakas? No.

9658. It just lets them rip? I am not prepared to say that.

9659. By Mr. Cowley: What was the actual number of Polynesians employed in tropical agriculture on 31st December last? I could give you the number under agreement on that day. I have not got it here.

9660. That is what I mean? But the return would not be of much value, because it has become a very common practice to make the terms of the agreement finish on 31st December, so that on 1st January a large number of them are walking about, waiting to re-engage. This return of 7,580 includes those men. The return is made on 1st day of January.

9661. And in June? No; only once a year.

9662. You said that you were not aware that you could sue the mortgagee of a plantation for six months' wages due to the kanakas for the six months prior to his taking possession? I was not aware of it.

9663. Now that you are aware of it, do you intend to sue the mortgagee of Bri Bri plantation to try and recover the wages due to the men? I will make inquiries and see what can be done.

9664. Cannot you sue the mortgagee without laying the case before the Minister? I would not take the responsibility of doing so without instructions. The Crown Law Office would have to be the machinery that would have to be used.

9665. But can't you put that machinery in motion without obtaining permission? No.

9666. Are you aware that the owners of Bri Bri are leasing a large quantity of their land at a good rental and deriving an income from it? No; I have very little knowledge of Bri Bri.

9667. You are not aware that they have a large number of horses on the plantation which could be levied on? I know practically nothing of it.

9668. And you have taken no steps whatever to recover the money for these men? I can't say that. I have not put the law in motion to do so.

9669. Are you aware that the Polynesian inspector at Ingham refuses to allow the owners of the Victoria plantation to use their hospital for treating their kanakas in, and insists on their all being sent in to the Ingham hospital, thereby overcrowding it to a very great extent? No.

9670. Have you had any communication on the subject? No, never.

9671. Is it not customary for an inspector to keep you posted up in everything of importance in regard to the kanakas in his district? Certainly. Only matters of importance, not mere matters of detail.

9672. Supposing an employer did not pay the wages to his men? Yes; he would report that.

9673. Have many reports of that nature been made to you lately? No.

9674. Have there been any cases besides Bri Bri during the last two years? No; no flagrant cases like Bri Bri.

9675. Have you had any actions at any time during the past five years against bondsmen—have you sued bondsmen for return passage money? Well, I do not think it has ever come to actual process of law, but the Crown Law Officers have been put in motion.

9676. And was that successful in every case? It generally resulted in the money being paid.

9677. Then the Government have not been put to the expense of returning any islanders? Yes; they have been. I have placed the circumstances before the Minister and been told that there would be no action taken.

9678. Can you give us the total amount that the Government have had to pay for return passages to the islands? That is a difficult question to answer off hand, but the annual printed report up to last June contains the names of three planters from whom I have been unable to obtain the return passage money that I considered due.

9679. Were the boys originally indentured to these planters? Yes.

9680. And were the usual bonds entered into? Yes.

9681. And what was the reason that the bondsmen were not prosecuted? Well, I am not in a position to answer that question.

9682. Can you tell us how many islanders had to be returned at the expense of the Government? Three men.

9683. You said three planters? Yes; three planters and three men.

9684. In each case had the boys served their three years with the planters? Yes. They had been in the colony some years in addition.

9685. Then the bondsmen's liability had lapsed after the three years? No; it is a continuous liability. The boy has either to be returned to his island or £5 paid to the Government.

9686. But should not action be taken at the end of the three years? I do not think so; not necessarily.

9687. These are the only cases that you are aware of? There are other cases in which passage money has been due, and should have been paid, but the islanders have not been returned, and therefore the money has not been paid.

9688. Are these the only cases in which the Government have had to return the islanders? Yes; for the twelve months covered by that report.

9689. Then if there were any other cases they would be embodied in your printed report? They might not. Possibly some time back amounts expended in that way may have been charged to the return passage subdivision, or may have been lost amongst a variety of figures. But of late I thought it best that all such cases should appear distinct. In the last annual statement three such cases appear.

9690. You say there is nothing in the Act to prevent an islander placing his money in anyone's hands besides the inspectors? The Act is entirely silent.

9691. You say that they do so from preference? That is my private opinion.

9692. Can you give any reason as to what induces them to do so from preference? No.

9693. Have you not had correspondence with employers because of their taking the wages of the men for safe keeping? Yes.

9694. And

9694. And yet you say that there is nothing in the Act which prevents the Polynesian giving his wages A. Woodward.
into anyone's hands for safe keeping? Certainly; but I think that an employer should certainly not act
as banker for his islanders. I think it is a most indecent thing. 22 Mar., 1889.

9695. This is simply a matter of private opinion of your own, there is nothing in the Act? Nothing in the Act.

9696. Have you not flatly refused to return burial fees to employers unless they made a statement showing that they were not holders of their employes money? Yes.

9697. Was this done on your own responsibility, as you had no authority under the Act to do so? Most decidedly, it was done under the authority of the Act in my opinion.

9698. Then would you withhold the amount of burial fees, if the employer had any moneys belonging to deceased islanders? Yes.

9699. Supposing an employer holds the money of other islanders than the deceased islander and does not hold any money of that islander's, would you then refuse to pay the burial expenses until he had sent in a statement showing what moneys he held for those islanders? Certainly not.

9700. In the cases of relations applying for a deceased islander's money, are you guided entirely by the report of the local inspector as to the justness of their claim? The local inspector has to fill up a printed form which I think includes all possible useful information on that point, and it is sent down to me and is verified, and if it is found to be a fair claim it is submitted to the Minister.

9701. Then the decision as to the justness of the claim rests with the Minister, not with you? Yes.

9702. *By Mr. King:* Do you submit all these applications to the Minister, or only such as you yourself approve of? They are all submitted, except that I might reject one that was palpably inaccurate; all that have the appearance of credibility I submit to the Minister. I certainly place recommendations on them because I have been asked to do so.

9703. *By Mr. Cowley:* When a local inspector informs you that persons are employing kanakas in contravention to the Act, do you not think it would be wise to prosecute those men without giving them any warning, as an example to others? The inspectors are not authorised to enter upon prosecutions of that nature.

9704. Then it rests entirely with the Minister, not with you? Yes; the responsibility would rest with him. An inspector may in any small case take action, but not in any serious case.

9705. But I mean in cases where men are being employed without agreement? The inspector would not take action without referring the matter to me, and so to the Minister.

9706. Have you no power to take action yourself? I would not take the responsibility. I may have the power under the Act.

9707. Are all police magistrates, by virtue of their office as such, inspectors of Polynesians? No; there are a certain number of police magistrates who have been Gazetted as *ex-officio* inspectors; about eight or nine.

9708. Then the police magistrate in the district where the kanakas were employed on a goldfield was not an inspector under the Act? I cannot answer that.

9709. You say that, as far as your knowledge of the matter goes, there is no difficulty in obtaining Polynesians from the islands. Can you tell us the reason why vessels do not always return with a full complement of recruits if there is no difficulty in obtaining them? A limit of time is frequently placed by the shipowner, and the vessel has to come back when the limit is reached, whether a full complement has been obtained or not. That is one reason.

9710. Can you supply the Commission with a list of vessels despatched from Queensland ports for the islands during 1888, giving the numbers of islanders they are allowed to carry by law, and the number they have brought back with them; the number of days occupied on the voyage, and the reasons for returning if the full complement has not been obtained? I think I could give it to you for the year 1888 complete. In 1888 there were sixteen vessels engaged in the trade, and a total tonnage of 2,819 tons, and accommodation for 1,866 islanders.

9711. I want an account of each trip? I can have it prepared. [*See Appendix.*]

9712. Very well. Can you give the Commission the number of islanders who have been indentured annually since 1885? Yes; in 1886, 1,505; in 1887, 1,988; in 1888, 2,261.

9713. *By the Chairman:* That shows that they are increasing? Yes; every year.

9714. *By Mr. Cowley:* Can you give us the average cost of introducing islanders for the three years? No; we only know by hearsay.

9715. Can you give us the duration of the voyages? Yes. Some voyages terminate prematurely owing to various causes, and it would not be fair to include them in the average. The average length of a voyage in 1888 was 124½ days; it ranged from 70 to 175 days.

9716. Will you give us the names of the ports wherethese vessels are owned? Yes; Brisbane, 3 vessels; Maryborough, 4; Bundaberg, 4; Mackay, 2; Sydney, 2; and Scotland, 1. That vessel is now wrecked. During 1888 the Brisbane vessels were engaged in bringing islanders for Mackay, Townsville, Herbert River, and Cairns; those owned in Maryborough were employed in bringing labourers for Mackay, Townsville, the Herbert River, and Cairns, and made one trip for Maryborough and Bundaberg conjointly. Those owned in Bundaberg brought islanders entirely for their own port; those of Mackay for their own port, and one made a trip for Townsville; those of Sydney for the Herbert and Johnstone Rivers; and the Scotch owned vessel was employed bringing islanders for Cairns.

9717. Have there not been cases of vessels having to return after being a short time out on account of the death or injury of the Government agent? Yes.

9718. And in these cases the vessels have entailed very serious loss to the owners? I would suppose so.

9719. You said that even if the captain was to die or be injured it would be the same, the vessel would have to return? It would.

9720. Would not the chief officer take charge? Not unless the chief officer had a captain's certificate.

9721. Is it not customary for the chief officer to hold a master's certificate? No.

9722. Is it optional for the owner whether he employs a chief officer who holds a master's certificate or one who does not? Yes.

9723. The Government take no cognisance of that? No.

9724. You said that in the case of a steamer two agents were sent, and that that plan did not answer on account of their disagreeing? That was one reason.

- A. Woodward. 9725. Did the ships lose anything by that? I do not think they lost anything by that disagreement. They lost for many reasons over which the Government agents had no control. It would be along matter to explain the cause of the non-success of that trip.
- 22 Mar., 1889. 9726. Are you aware that many islanders go from Queensland to New South Wales and are employed on plantations on the Tweed River? Yes; a good many of them.
9727. In these cases the previous employer cannot recover the return passage money which he may previously have paid? Persons claiming for return passage money can only recover it from legal employers under the Act.
9728. Has nothing been done to make the employers of these boys who have migrated to New South Wales pay? Nothing.
9729. In the case of boys who have been in New South Wales for some time, and who have returned to Queensland, and who wish to be returned to their island, would you pay their passage back under these circumstances, or pay the money to the previous employer? If he wished to go home the money in the hands of the Government would be utilised in sending him.
9730. Although he had been employed in New South Wales for one, two, three, or more years? Yes; there is no limit to the time.
9731. Do you think that any arrangement could be made by which the money could be obtained from the kanaka in those cases where he has been working out of the colony, and be returned to the previous employer? I do not think so. I was entirely opposed to the recoupment clause of the Act of 1884. It is a most unfair thing to the employer and to the islander. The islander pays his passage over and over again, practically. Every time he re-engages he virtually pays his £5 over again, and some islanders have tried to get rid of this liability by themselves paying the £5 to the employer and thus stopping it. But the law stands so, and we have to carry it out to the best of our ability; but I think it is a most iniquitous thing to the islander and the employer. A man may employ an islander for only a month, and if he is the last employer before the boy returns he has to pay the £5;—it is very iniquitous.
9732. Would it not be a better arrangement for the second or third employer to pay the passage money direct to the Polynesian inspector when an agreement was made with an islander, and for the inspector to pay the previous employer? No; if that were done the confusion would be complete. There is so much difficulty in making out the names of these boys that mistakes constantly occur, and there is no end of difficulty in tracing out and identifying these men, and if it came to each subsequent employer lodging the return passage money with the Government the confusion would be hopeless.
9733. Only in a few isolated cases? No; it would be hopeless. The inspector does not hand over the money; he has to transmit it here.
9734. If an employer engages a kanaka for six months on the 1st of May, what amount of hospital fees has he to pay? £1.
9735. Why is that? It is according to the Act.
9736. But the Act says £1 for twelve months? I beg your pardon,—reference to sec. 6 49 Vic., No. 17, reading from the words "the like sum," will show you that in the case you cite 20s. would be payable.
9737. Don't you think that it is very hard on an employer who engages a man for six months only that he should have to pay a full twelve months' hospital fees? No, it is fair for all. The previous Act, of which that is an amendment, arranged that the fees should be *pro rata* about 10d. a month. I cannot understand anyone objecting to the arrangement under the present Act.
9738. You stated that there is £11,590 3s. 5d. to the credit of the Pacific Islanders' Fund. What is the debit? There is no debit.
9739. Is this money held so as to pay from it for the return of the islanders to their homes? The balance is the only asset of the "Fund" which is liable for the return of the islanders now in the colony, and as far as that is concerned the Pacific Islanders' Fund is insolvent.
9740. What are the imaginary debits? The imaginary debits would be the amount for the return passage for which the fund is liable.
9741. What would that amount to? £17,935.
9742. Then if the whole of these islanders were returned there would be a deficit of over £6,000? Yes, the fund would be insolvent to the extent of £6,000.
9743. Are you of opinion that this amount will ever be required? I have endeavoured to arrive at an estimate of what would be required, and I believe that about £2,000 of the amount named would not be required.
9744. By the Chairman: I understand from the annual statement of accounts that there is also a sum to the credit of deceased islanders' estate fund of £21,955 19s. 2d.? Yes.
9745. And is that money absolutely due to deceased islanders? It has accrued from the estates of deceased islanders. Those sums appear on the credit side of the ledger, but the deceased islanders' estate in one way is pretty well balanced by the deficiency upon hospitals; they absorb that money.
9746. The Polynesian hospitals now absorb a very large amount of that fund in addition to the fee of 20s. a year which is paid for each islander? Yes.
9747. Then if you did not have the deceased islanders' estate fund, and the return passage fund to work on Parliament would have to be appealed to carry on the hospitals? Yes.
9748. Or the fees would have to be raised? Yes.
9749. What is the total amount of money in the Savings Bank to the credit of the islanders? On the 31st December last it was £17,000, speaking from memory. That money is in the hands of the various inspectors—that is, it is under their control.
9750. Would that represent the sums due to deceased islanders? No; these are living islanders.
9751. Then when an islander dies, who draws the money out of the Savings Bank? When an islander dies, the inspector obtains a report of the death from the employer, and the amount of current wages due, and then he looks up the Savings Bank book, and if there is any money to the credit of the islander he transmits the book with the death report and the wages to me. Once a month I withdraw these deceased islanders' savings from the bank, and it is paid into the credit of the fund.
9752. What was the general mortality among the Polynesians in Queensland during last year? There were 442 deaths reported. Possibly we did not get them all reported. In 1887 there were 520 deaths, and in 1886, 373, so that the death rate is getting more favourable. The deaths which occurred during

- 1888 were reported from the following districts:—Brisbane, 88; Beenleigh, 17; Maryborough, 38; A. Woodward. Bundaberg, 194; Rockhampton, 1; Mackay, 112; Townsville and the Burdekin, 54; Herbert River (Ingham), 33; Johnstone River (Geraldton), 22; Cairns and Port Douglas, 12. 22 Mar., 1889.
9753. Have the inspectors reported to you any efforts that are being made in their respective districts for the religious instruction of the kanakas? No.
9754. Then you are not aware that in other parts besides Bundaberg, efforts are being made by Christian men and women to give religious instruction to the South Sea Islanders? I believe in Mackay such is the case.
9755. Have you not heard of other places? No.
9756. Then no effort is made on the part of the department in any way to give religious instruction to them? No.
9757. Have any applications been made to your department for aid in that respect? No.
9758. Then, as far as you are aware, these efforts to give religious and secular instruction to the kanakas are entirely voluntary? Yes.
9759. Has the inspector at Ingham reported to you the large number of Polynesians in the hospital there? Yes.
9760. Did he ever report to you that there were as many as eighty-five in one day? I don't recollect it.
9761. I do not mean eighty-five admitted in one day; I mean eighty-five present at that time in the hospital? Oh yes. In October there were 111 admitted during the month, and in January 183.
9762. Has he ever complained to you that the majority of these patients came from one plantation? Yes; from the Victoria plantation.
9763. Has he ever complained to you of the food supplied by that plantation? Yes.
9764. Have you ordered him to see that the required amount of food be supplied? Yes; and I believe that it is remedied now. The result has been that the islanders have had the time allowed for their mid-day meal extended from one hour to one hour and a-half, and that in place of sweet potatoes and cold water they are supplied with the proper quantities of bread, meat, potatoes, and boiled water.
9765. Has any correspondence passed between the manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in Sydney in regard to some of the complaints made by Mr. Forster, the inspector at Ingham? Yes.
9766. Is Mr. Forster regarded by your department as an efficient officer? I believe he is a conscientious officer and endeavours to do his duty.
9767. Are you still of opinion that, as far as the complaints which have reached the Commission with regard to the disturbance between the whites and blacks on the Norton Gold Field are concerned, no information has reached your department? No; not about a disturbance. I might mention that I believe some correspondence has reached the Colonial Secretary's Office. I was informed that some had, but I do not know what action was taken in the matter.
9768. Has information reached your department that time-expired islanders are now competing successfully with the white population of the colony? No.
9769. Then it may have occurred without the knowledge of the department? Yes.
9770. Do not the local inspectors report occurrences of that kind to you? They would report any cases of any violation of the Act that came under their knowledge; but the law is open to any white man who feels aggrieved. It is not in a case of this kind, as in others, necessary for the action to be taken by an Inspector.
9771. Supposing that a number of time-expired boys were to settle down on the reserve of a township and unscrupulous persons were to supply them with liquor, and they were thereby to become a nuisance, and insulted respectable females living in the locality who had to pass them, would it not be the local inspector's duty to report such an occurrence to you? Yes.
9772. Have you been informed that such an occurrence has happened to the knowledge of the police magistrate of Bundaberg? I have no recollection of having the matter reported to me. Did it happen recently?
9773. Yes? Certainly not.
9774. *By Mr. Cowley:* Have you found that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have expressed their willingness to do anything they can for the comfort of their islanders? Yes; I have always found that they are willing to do so.
9775. Is it not a fact that they serve out rations to the islanders according to the doctor's advice? That I cannot state.
9776. Has it been reported to you that they do not get the rations allowed by law? Mr. Forster has made complaints of that nature; but I have told him that I did not consider it necessary that the meat should be weighed out to the fraction of an ounce, provided it was of good quality and the islanders got sufficient.
9777. So long as they get sufficient, you are satisfied? Yes; that is the great thing. There is no use troubling about the precise weight of a ration.
9778. Then the complaints of Mr. Forster originated from himself, and not from any of the islanders complaining to him? I think they originated from himself. He never reported to me that the islanders had complained.
9779. Have you ever issued any instructions to Mr. Forster to the effect that they are not to be allowed to erect a Polynesian hospital on the Victoria Plantation? No.
9780. Then you would be willing, so far as you are concerned, that the islanders on the Victoria Plantation should be treated at their own hospital, except in serious cases which should be sent to the central hospital, the same as they do at Gouli on the Johnstone River? Yes; provided the medical officer was in constant attendance.
9781. I mean that in trivial cases like a cut thumb, or a cut toe or finger, there would be no objection to their being treated on the plantation, subject to the approval of a qualified medical officer? None whatever, as long as the doctor was cognisant of what was being done.

EVIDENCE FURNISHED IN ANSWER TO PRINTED QUESTIONS FORWARDED BY THE COMMISSION TO PLANTERS AND FARMERS.

In order to facilitate the work of the Commission, the following questions were drawn up and forwarded to all planters and farmers in the Mackay, Bundaberg, Maryborough, Brisbane, and Logan districts, to which the answers following were given, and for convenience sake are placed in narrative form:—

QUESTIONS.

1. What is your name (in full) ?
2. What experience have you had in the cultivation of sugar or other tropical produce ?
3. What is the name of the Estate you now own or manage ?
4. What is its total area ?
5. How much of it is now under cultivation (giving areas under different crops) ?
6. How many acres of cane were crushed from it this last season ?
7. How much sugar was made ?
8. How much molasses ?
9. What was done with the molasses ?
10. What amount of capital is invested in the Estate ?
11. What rate of interest did it return during 1888 ?
12. What was the working expenses for 1888 ?
13. What labour was employed, specifying number of Europeans, Chinese, Kanakas, Javanese, &c. ?
14. What were the average wages paid to the coloured classes of labour ?
15. What was the total amount of wages paid to Europeans, to Chinese, to Kanakas, and to Javanese or others during 1888 ?
16. What description of labour do you consider the most suitable for field work ?
17. Have you employed European labour in field work, and are Europeans able and willing to do it when horses cannot be worked ?
18. When the land is perfectly free from stumps, will not Europeans, working horses and machinery, be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour ?
19. How many acres of cane do you cultivate for each black labourer employed ?
20. How many acres could one European work if able to use the plough, horse, hoe, &c., on the land ?
21. Do the blacks employed in field labour suffer in health ?
22. Does field work affect the health of Europeans ?
23. What is the cost per acre of falling and burning off scrub ?
24. What would be the cost of stumping it to make it fit for plough ?
25. What diseases or vermin is your cane or other crops subject to, and what remedies have been tried and found effectual ?
26. To what extent was the crop of 1888 affected by disease or vermin ?
27. What was the cost of your machinery, and where was it manufactured ?
28. What is the cost of the annual overhaul and repairs ?
29. What wages are paid to European labourers outside of agriculture in your district ?
30. What tropical productions other than sugar do you think can be grown in your district ?
31. What labour would be required to render their growth profitable ?
32. Have you grown any tropical produce besides sugar, and if so, with what result ?
33. Can you state the causes which, in your opinion, have depressed the sugar industry ?
34. Can you offer any suggestions by which the industry can be relieved from that depression ?
35. Can you offer any suggestions for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar-growing ?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

MACKAY DISTRICT.

ALFRED HARRI LLOYD, "Dumbleton," has 1,180 acres, 25 acres under sugar cane and 5 acres under maize and garden. Left off sugar growing in 1887; average wages paid to kanakas in 1886, £12 per annum; considers white men and Polynesians the most suitable for field work in the proportion of one white man to four kanakas; has employed European labour to his cost; they were not able to do field work and were in fact not willing to do so; when the land is free from stumps Europeans can work machinery with horses and even the ridges if they are cleared of the scrub. One kanaka can cultivate six acres of sugar land; one European, if able to use the plough and horse-hoe, can cultivate eight acres, and if he worked land that was his own he could cultivate ten acres; the health of the kanakas is on the average good; field work does not affect the health of Europeans so long as they are sober; when they are strong they can retain their health; no disease or vermin is on his land now, but when he grew cane it was affected by rats, grubs, and rust; the cost of machinery in his mill was £2,000, and was made by John Walker and Co., of Maryborough; he cannot say the usual wages paid to European labourers outside of agriculture, but stockmen receive £10 a year and rations. Of tropical productions he thinks that maize, coffee, millet, fruits, and vegetables—tropical

tropical and sub-tropical—can be grown in the district, provided white and coloured labour is combined. Considers the depression in the sugar industry to have arisen—1st, from the discouragement of the importation of coloured labour; and, 2nd, in consequence of the immense progress in the production of beet-root sugar. The suggestions he offers for the relief of the depression are—intercolonial treaties and exchange, protection for Australian products, and encouragement of Polynesian labour. For the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing he advocates cheap, reliable labour.

Mr. Lloyd adds—"I venture to answer these questions although I am doing no cane growing or sugar making now, but I was a planter from 1871 to 1887, and was one of the first to take up land in 1886 and grow maize and cane."

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, "Habana," has had some knowledge of sugar growing during the last eighteen years, and for the last seven years has been personally interested in the cultivation of sugar cane in Mackay district; no knowledge of other tropical products; total area of estate, 1,197 acres, of which 1,170 acres are under cane, 24 acres under sweet potatoes, and 3 acres bananas; 867 acres cultivated by Habana firm and 330 by farmers; about 730 acres crushed last season, of which 450 were cultivated by Habana, and 330 by farmers; produced 67½ tons sugar, and 165 tons molasses; molasses at present stored in tanks; £62,686 invested in estate, which returned no interest during 1888; working expenses for 1888, £12,131; employed 36 Europeans and 220 kanakas, number of Europeans much below the average on account of small crop; average wages paid to coloured labour, £10 16s. per annum and rations; total outlay on account of each kanaka, £40 per annum; total wages paid to Europeans (1888), £24,488, to kanakas, £2,377; considers South Sea Island labour the most suitable for field work; has not employed Europeans to any extent in field work; Europeans may be able, but are certainly not willing, to do field work when horses cannot be used; Europeans do not work efficiently as hand labourers in cane fields; does not think Europeans will be able to do much of the field work now done by black labour when land is perfectly free from stumps and machinery can be used: black labour is required for hand work, especially in hilly and stony country, which is the nature of scrub land in Mackay district, and where horses and machinery cannot be used; cultivates about five acres for each black labourer employed; has no data to enable him to say how many acres one European could cultivate, using plough, horse, and hoe; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, they have very good health as a rule; thinks if Europeans stick to field work for any length of time it would affect their health, when on wages they rarely try the experiment; costs about £4 10s. per acre to fall and burn off scrub; scrubs as a rule too steep for ploughing; hand labour must be used; stumps allowed to rot, which most of them do in about three years; cane has been free from disease, but vermin in the shape of grubs and rats have done some damage; the former disappeared after a time, the latter have been partially destroyed by poisoning; crop of 1888 not affected to any great extent by disease or vermin; drought was the cause of the short crop; cost of machinery in mill, £17,455; manufactured in Glasgow, London, and France, £13,855; Queensland, £3,600, exclusive of freight, erection, and buildings; cost of annual overhaul about £450; wages paid to Europeans in district, outside of agriculture, 28s. per week and rations; considers that coffee, spices, arrowroot, coconuts, indigo, also many fibre plants, any tropical fruits, and possibly rice can be grown in district; but to render their growth profitable South Sea Island labour, or some other similar class of labour that would be cheap and reliable, would be required; has not attempted to grow any other tropical produce besides sugar, with the exception of sweet potatoes and bananas for plantation use; considers the three main causes of depression in the sugar industry are—1st, the uncertainty that has existed for some time past of getting suitable labour to carry on and extend operations, and the heavy cost of importing such suitable labour as could be got, viz., South Sea Islanders, on account of restrictions in recruiting and the payment of fees that appear to be excessive; 2nd, the low price of sugar during the last five years, crops having in many instances netted less than the cost of production without speaking of interest on capital. Large estates with great economy may have made ends meet, but small estates have been forced to close; 3rd, the absence from many estates of the most approved modern appliances for the extraction of the largest percentage possible of juice, and for the manufacture of the sugar economically. Suggests, by way of remedying the depression, allowing planters suitable labour, reliable and cheap, to give them a fair opportunity of competing with other sugar growing countries where labour is plentiful; planters would then feel justified, as they cannot feel at present, in procuring the best and most modern appliances for manufacturing; Queensland could then take a first position as a sugar-producing country; also, by extending the central mill system, which could be done best by placing the small farmer on the same footing as the large planter as regards labour; the capitalist would then have confidence to step in and erect machinery to take off the crops of small growers; these small growers should have cheap and reliable labour just as much as the large growers. Says that the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing depends entirely upon the labour question; instances the production of coffee; believes there is sufficient land in the Mackay district alone suitable for coffee growing now lying idle that if cultivated would produce enough of the article to supply the Queensland market for years to come, or even the Australian colonies; believes that coffee would be grown extensively in the district, if capitalists were allowed suitable labour to cultivate the areas and gather the crops. Similar remarks would apply to almost any other tropical agriculture that could be named. Says that the whole matter is in a nutshell; the agriculturist wants no special favours from the State, but merely wishes to obtain, at his own cost, labourers suitable for the industry in which he is engaged, so that he may reasonably look for a fair return of interest on the capital invested; the seasons and markets being beyond control, must be chanced. Of course it is understood that the labourers introduced must be law-abiding, and must not be allowed to interfere with other industries that might be carried on successfully by the employment of other classes of labour.

Mr. ROBERTSON makes the following further special remarks upon Habana estate, not incorporated in the replies to the questions submitted:—

"The proprietors of Habana have done what they could towards the central mill system by encouraging farmers to settle upon various parts of the estate, in order that such farmers might grow a portion of the cane required in the mill. Nine farmers are now either growing or preparing to grow cane for the mill. Several years' experience has shown that these farmers could not have carried on without the assistance of coloured labourers, any more than the estate itself could have carried on without them.

The

The total of the white population numbers eighty-six at the present time, counting men, women, and children, who are connected with the estate either under engagement, or as farmers looking to the mill to get their cane crushed. The large extent of hilly scrub lands on Habana, where horses and machinery cannot be used, makes it imperative that an adequate supply of cheap and reliable labour should be available to carry on the estate at any profit whatever."

DANIEL MARKEY, "Avondale," has had eighteen years' experience in cultivation of sugar and other tropical produce; has 740 acres, 60 under sugar cane, 4 under sweet potatoes; sold his cane last year for plants; £2,000 invested in his estate; amount received for crop in 1888, £235; working expenses last year, £265; employed two Europeans and five kanakas; average wages paid to kanakas, £19; total wages paid in 1888, Europeans, £78, kanakas, £83; considers kanakas the most suitable for field work; Europeans will not do field work except with horses; all weeding between the cane must be done by hand, and Europeans will not do it; cultivates 12 acres of cane for each black labourer employed; no experience of what acreage a European could cultivate if able to use plough, hoe, horses, &c., must have hand labour as well as horse, hoe, and plough; never found blacks suffer in health through field work; weeding between the cane will affect the health of Europeans; has no scrub on his property, and therefore does not know cost of clearing; his cane has suffered from no disease except the want of water.

JOHN MCBRYDE, "Richmond and Inverness," has had eighteen years' experience in growing sugar; total area of estate 1,070 acres, 330 acres under sugar cane (plants, ratoons, and cane being cultivated for 1890 crops); crushed 220 acres last season for a yield of 75 tons sugar and 2,500 gallons of molasses; uses molasses to feed horses; in previous seasons it was converted into solid molasses for which there had been a moderate demand in central west districts; last season the quantity was too small there not being more than enough for stock feeding; about £30,000 invested in estate; loss for 1888, £1,300; working expenses for 1888, £2,568 2s. 0d.; employed thirteen Europeans, one Coolie, and fifty-two kanakas; paid first agreement kanakas £6 to £9; expiring kanakas £12 to £15, and coolie 10s. per week; total wages paid to Europeans in 1888, £860 10s. 5d.; kanakas, £431 17s. 2d.; coolie, £1 18s. 4d.; considers kanaka labour most suitable for field work; never employed Europeans on weekly wages, especially for field work; has tried them on contract at weeding, but in every case their work was costly and bad; has tried them on contract at cutting and loading, which was more satisfactory; Europeans are able and willing to do certain field work, but would be too costly; when horses cannot be worked Europeans are generally employed in draining, repairing fences, and other jobs; Europeans working horses and machinery do all the work possible both in the cleared forest land and in the scrub lands where the smaller stumps have rotted; no machinery is likely to take the place of hand labour owing to the stony nature of the fields on the north side of the Pioneer; cultivates from 4 to 7 acres of cane for each black labourer employed; with kanaka labour for planting, weeding, and trashing one ploughman is required for every 40 acres, that is to do all the necessary work with ploughs, harrows, and cultivators; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, their health being quite as good when employed in field at when at work in the sugar-house; planting and trashing would be, to some extent, injurious to the health of Europeans, the first owing to the continued stooping in excessive heat, and in trashing, the excessive moist heat and absence of fresh air; costs from 30s. to 40s. an acre for felling scrub, and for cutting up and burning the small saplings and branches leaving the larger trees on the ground, about 40s. an acre; mode adopted by him after felling is to give contracts for cordwood at 5s. to 6s. 6d. per cord, when the ground is almost cleared; stumping too costly to pay; the small stumps decay in about one year, in about three years the plough can be used by avoiding the large stumps; stones are much more in the way than stumps, crops have been subject to grubs in dry seasons and are very destructive; rats destroy a little cane in the scrub land chiefly, the borer is always to be found but does not do a great deal of damage; several varieties of cane are injured by a disease resembling rust; the dry season of 1888 caused a serious destruction of cane by the grubs, but the drought was chiefly the cause of the crops only being one-fourth of what might reasonably have been expected; machinery at Richmond was made in Glasgow, Greenock, Brisbane, and Mackay and cost originally, with buildings about £10,000; a mill at Inverness, which was manufactured in Brisbane, has not been in use for some years and is now in order for manufacturing sugar; annual overhaul costs about £120; wages paid to Europeans outside of agriculture, from 15s. to 30s. per week with rations; from 5s. to 7s. per day without rations; considers that rice, coffee, tobacco, and fruits can be grown in the district, and with irrigation all tropical fruits such as would not be injured by the cold, say to 32 degrees for a few nights in the winter; on the hills the thermometer rarely falls under 42 degrees, but irrigation would there be difficult, if not impracticable; to make their growth profitable thinks that kanakas, coolies, or any other description of labour, the cost of which did not exceed 2s. per day for wages and rations would be required; considers the causes of depression in the sugar industry are scarcity and high price of labour, low price of sugar, a succession of very unfavourable seasons, exhaustion of soil through continuous cropping, and deterioration of many of the varieties of canes now in cultivation; suggests by way of relief of the depression a continuance of the Pacific Islanders Act; considers that absolutely necessary if the sugar industry is to exist in the Mackay district; thinks it should be continued with improved regulations, so that the cost of introduction, capitulation, and other fees should be considerably lessened; experiments should be undertaken for the purpose of ascertaining what artificial manures would be the most suitable for the soil and climate, and the best mode of applying them; the experiments should be carried out under the advice and supervision of a competent agricultural chemist, who would visit the sugar districts in rotation (in the first place devoting most of his attention to the older estates), and who would analyse soil when required; further suggests reciprocity with one or more of the other colonies, which would give immediate relief; irrigation would be of great benefit, but the water supply for his own and similarly situated estates would have to be obtained by the formation of reservoirs, or from artesian wells; would also greatly benefit the industry if the agricultural department would obtain plants from other countries (using all precautions against bringing in diseased cane) and distributing them amongst the planters at cost price; this could be done by the Government, cheaper and better than by individual effort; says Government has already established experimental farms which show proof of great value, and that the foregoing remarks, with regard to sugar, as to labour, irrigation, &c., would apply equally to other tropical agricultural products.

ANDREW

ANDREW FLORENCE, "Inverarie," has been cultivating mixed crops since 1871; has 1,320 acres; about 60 acres under cultivation—45 acres cane, 1 acre sweet potatoes, 4 acres sorghum, and small patches of other crops; 56 acres of cane crushed last season; sold it to Meadowlands Estate; commenced in 1871 with capital of £500; has been cultivating at a loss; working expenses for 1888, £400; labour employed, self, two sons, and six kanakas; average wages paid to coloured labour, £18; total wages paid to kanakas in 1888, £108; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; up to within the last five years has tried to work with white labour, including his two sons, but found it unsuitable for field work; as far as his experience has gone finds white labour unsuitable and unreliable; when land is free from stumps, father and family may be able by working horses and machinery to do much of the work now done by black labour, but he prefers kanakas and finds them more profitable; cultivates 6 acres of cane for each black labourer employed; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; but field work affects the health of Europeans in a tropical climate; his estate does not consist of scrub land; in 1875 rust attacked his Bourbon cane; has since used other varieties with variable success; crop has been affected by drought; tropical productions such as arrowroot, coffee, tea, ginger, cinnamon, olives, and indigo can be grown in district, but kanakas, or other reliable and cheap labour, would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown maize, arrowroot, ginger, and small patches of other tropical plants, but found none of them reliable in this climate; considers depression of sugar industry due—1st, to prospect of labour being cut off in 1890; 2nd, high price of labour; 3rd, drought; 4th, low price of sugar; suggests for the relief of the industry extension of kanaka labour and irrigation; suggests same for the promotion of other tropical agriculture.

INGVERT WILHELM CHRISTENSEN, "Cornitweed," has had seven years' experience of sugar growing; total area of estate, 420 acres; 150 acres under sugar cane, 44 acres crushed last season; 278 tons of cane crushed at Homebush mill; £600 invested in estate, which returned 13 per cent. interest in 1888; £154 working expenses for 1888, including £1 a week for his own labour; employed 16 Chinese for six weeks cutting and loading; no labour expended on cultivation; average wages paid to coloured labour, 22s. per week, cook 24s.; total wages paid to all classes of labour in 1888, £102, in addition to his own expenses; considers Polynesians far more suitable than any other class of labourers, white or coloured, for field work; has tried Europeans repeatedly for field work, but could never get them to stay any time; has no experience as to whether Europeans with horses and machinery will be able to do much of the work now done by black labour when the land is free from stumps; his own land is mountain scrub, and could not be worked by horses and machinery; cultivates about 10 acres on an average for each black labourer employed; no experience of what acreage a European could cultivate if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c.; blacks do not suffer through field labour, but has always found that white men suffer severely from the great heat while working in a stooping position among crops; cost per acre of felling and burning off scrub, about £4 10s.; impossible to say what would be the cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough; the white grub did a lot of damage to his cane last year; no remedy was tried; about a quarter of the crop was destroyed by grubs, and between them and the drought his returns for 1889 will be nil; probably many other tropical productions besides sugar can be grown in the district; should think the different fibres, and perhaps cotton, would do well in favourable seasons; the labour required to make their growth profitable must be cheap and reliable; has grown no other tropical product but sugar; considers the causes of the depression in the sugar industry the great fall in the price of sugar and the restrictions placed on the coloured labour trade; planters must have a supply of cheap and reliable labour to enable them to compete with other countries in the outside market; suggests for the promotion of other tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing the establishment of nursery farms, distribution of information as to growth and manufacture of articles of commercial value, and perhaps the advancing of loans to agricultural corporations as to other local bodies.

NILS PETERSON, "Marseilles," has had seven years' experience in growing sugar cane; total area of estate, 144 acres; 80 acres under cultivation—70 under sugar cane, and 10 under maize; 58 acres were crushed last season, producing 34½ tons of cane, which was sold to the Homebush mill, at 10s. per ton; capital invested, £100; rate of interest it returned in 1888, nil; working expenses for 1888, £352 10s.; employs two white men and four kanakas; average wages paid to coloured labour, £16 per annum and rations; total wages paid in 1888, £130 to Europeans and £64 to kanakas; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; has not employed Europeans in field work; they are not willing to do weeding and trashing; his land is perfectly free from stumps, but European labour would not be willing or suitable to do work that he employs kanakas to do; cultivated 1½ acres for each black labourer employed on crop of 1888 for cultivation, not including cutting and carting; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, but stooping to weed and trashing and cutting cane affects the health of Europeans; has no scrub land; his crops have been subject to the attack of the grub but has tried no remedy; crop of 1888 very slightly affected by disease or vermin; believes the causes of the depression of the sugar industry to be the drought and the suppression of coloured labour; suggests as a remedy, irrigation and reliable cheap labour.

FREDERIC WILLIAM BOLTON, "Farleigh" (including "Foulden"), has had nearly five years' experience in the cultivation of sugar cane; total area of estate, 2,400 acres; 1,129 acres 2 roods 24 perches under cane only; crushed 711 acres of cane last season for a yield of 310 tons white sugar, and about 10,000 gallons of molasses; molasses consumed by horses, cattle, and about 500 gallons will be refined for golden syrup; amount of capital invested in Farleigh (including Foulden), £151,699 13s. 7d.; returned no interest in 1888 on capital invested; working expenses for 1888, £13,657 1s. 1d. (including £1,425 for purchased cane); employed 45 Europeans, 153 kanakas, and 35 Javanese on Farleigh (including Foulden); average wages paid to coloured classes of labour, £9 6s. 9d. per annum, including 33 re-engagement kanakas and 35 Javanese at same rate; 120 three years' agreement kanakas averaged £6 6s.; total wages paid in 1888. Europeans, £2,936 10s. 1d.; Javanese, £480; and kanakas, £1,276 14s. 6d.; considers Europeans most suitable for skilled labour and kanakas or suitable coloured labour of some description for the unskilled labour; has employed Europeans only in connection with cane carting, and found them unsuitable; plantation consists of forest land and is already free from stumps; Europeans, horses, and implements are already used to the fullest extent practicable; cultivates about 5 acres for each black labourer employed, allowing for labour employed in connection with the mill; in

in his opinion, for the entire work of the plantation European labour would be impracticable; blacks employed in field labour certainly do not suffer in health, judging from their appearance on first arrival and their appearance on departure; field work unquestionably affects the health of Europeans to some extent; cost per acre of felling and burning off scrub £3 15s., to £5 5s., including planting 20s. and plants 20s.; the small area of scrub at Farleigh is ridgy and as such stumping is undesirable; cane has been affected by rust, caterpillars, and grubs; as a remedy for rust has changed the cane, for caterpillars has applied a sprinkling of lime round the base of the plant, but when in overwhelming numbers any action has been practically useless, grubs have been largely destroyed by fallowing and working up the land once or twice during time of fallowing, they have given no trouble in a good season; crop of 1888 was affected slightly by grubs, owing to the dry season; cost of machinery in mill £30,000, and was manufactured in Glasgow; annual overhaul is undertaken by the engineer, who is employed by the year, and does the repairing, &c.; duplicates, such as firebars average £20 per annum; wages paid to Europeans in district, outside of agriculture, are the average wages of the colony, so far as he knows; perhaps several other tropical productions besides sugar cane can be grown in district, but in his opinion sugar is the most suitable; to render the growth of other products profitable, coloured labour would undoubtedly be required; has only grown sugar; considers the causes of the depression in the sugar industry are the greatly increased cost of coloured labour, low prices and bad seasons; suggests by way of relief an unlimited supply of cheap coloured labour, reduction in charges on account of kanakas, legislation with a view to increasing prices by reciprocity, subsidy, &c., taking off duty on sugar machinery, and machinery, implements, and tramways for agricultural purposes, and a Government irrigation scheme; can offer no suggestions for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing.

CLEMENT JOHNSON, "Dingle Farm," has had twelve years experience; total area of estate, 175 acres; 36 acres under sugar cane, 15 acres of maize, $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of oats $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of amber cane and sorghum, 2 acres of sweet potatoes, pumpkins and melons; has another 75 acres cleared and ready for the plough; 25 tons only of cane were crushed last season, as the estate had been under grass previous to taking possession eighteen months ago; about 2 tons of sugar were made; the molasses was fed to horses and cattle. Capital invested, £300; but previous owner invested £1000 in clearing and other improvements; loss of about £169 in 1888; working expenses for 1888, about £200; employed four kanakas and two Europeans, besides self and partner; average rate of wages paid to coloured labour, £15 per annum; total wages paid to kanakas in 1888, £69; to the two partners, nil. Considers (reliable) white or kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; reliability is the great desideratum; has employed Europeans in field work; they are preferable amongst horses and implements, and able and willing to compete with any other class of labour if we only have the proper farming class. When the land is free from stumps, Europeans working horses and machinery will most decidedly be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; let them have improved implements, irrigation, practical management, and white labour; cultivates about 10 acres of cane, exclusive of all other tropical products, for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use the plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate 25 acres; blacks employed in field labour do not suffer in health, nor do Europeans after they have been here a couple of years; cost per acre of felling and burning off scrub from £5 to £20; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, about £15; his cane has not suffered from vermin or disease; crop of 1888 not affected by vermin or disease; cost of machinery about £150 (English, American, colonial, and local); cost of annual overhaul and repairs about £25; wages paid to Europeans, in district, outside of agriculture, from 15s. to 25s. a week; the tropical productions, other than sugar, that can be grown in the district, are, fruit, coffee, rice, maize, amber cane, cotton, sweet potatoes, ghamors, tobacco, chinchona, and fibre (such as *sida retusa*, *Rosa*, and ramai); the labour required to render their growth profitable would be reliable Europeans or kanakas; considers Chinese, Japanese, or other Asiatic labour neither reliable, cheap, or suitable; has grown the tropical productions above enumerated with the best of results; considers the causes of the depression of the industry are inferior management, exhausted soil, inferior implements, want of irrigation, no rotation of crops, and no change of plants; suggests for the relief of the depression, irrigation, small estates under efficient management to produce the cane, mills to be the factories only, soils to be manured chemically and according to their deficiency, with a twelve months' fallow prior to planting with cane with a rotation system of five years, which would enable the ground to rest for three years under artificial grasses for pasture for sheep and dairy cattle; considers that sugar growing will never become of great value to the grower as long as he depends on it alone for a profit; it should be as an adjunct to farming; there are plenty of other tropical products that will prove more remunerative than cane growing for the production of which he suggests the establishment of agricultural colleges or experimental farms, to teach both practically and theoretically the cultivation of tropical plants.

JOSEPH ANTONY, "Eton Vale," has had seventeen years' experience in sugar growing; total area of estate 1,601 acres; 134 acres under sugar and 23 under corn; 100 acres of plant cane crushed last season; cane sold to the central mill at 10s. per ton; £6,000 invested in the estate; rate of interest returned during 1898—none; working expenses for 1888, £700; employed 10 Europeans occupied in cultivating 100 acres of cleared land; total wages paid in 1888, £520; considers Polynesian labour the most suitable for field work: Europeans not able to do field work when horses cannot be used; Europeans will not be able to do much of the work now done by black labour when the land is free from stumps, and horses and machinery can be worked; employs no black labour; one European could work 5 acres if able to use the plough, horse, and hoe; blacks employed in field labour do not suffer in health; during his experience he has lost one black labourer; field work affects the health of Europeans, especially in the months of November, December, January, and February; his cane has suffered from the white louse, the borer, and sometimes a blight like that which attacks orange trees—caused principally by want of change in plants; it has also suffered through bad cultivation; crop of 1888 affected by disease or vermin to the extent of about 10 per cent.; average rate of wages paid to Europeans outside of agriculture in the district, 20s. per week; thinks tropical products such as tobacco, cotton, spices, coffee, cocoa, rice, and fibres, can be grown in the district; coloured labour would be required to render their growth profitable; considers causes of depression in the sugar industry are drought and want of reliable and cheap labour; suggests by way of relief of the depression, good markets, reliable cheap labour, and an extensive irrigation system; also united

united action on the part of the planters and others engaged in tropical agriculture; suggests for the encouragement of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing, the introduction of capital and experienced men from tropical countries in the same way that the Government import from England experienced engineers, &c., when they are wanted.

In addition to the foregoing information, the following letter was also addressed to the Commission by Mr. Antoney:—

Eton Vale, February, 1889.

To the Commissioners, Sugar Industry.

GENTLEMEN,—

Outside of the thirty-five questions on the printed form I have had the honour of answering, may I be permitted to furnish you with my experience of growing sugar cane with white labour only. I had taken a large number of shares in the "Central Mill" here, with a view to give the matter a fair trial. Since August, 1887, up to present date I have placed on this Estate over twenty white settlers, who are engaged to cultivate up to fifty acres each. I have furnished them with horses, implements, rations, houses, &c., to the amount of £1,500, and have spent ready money (£800) in surveys and fencing, &c., with this result: That the united amount of acres actually under cane is 144 upon which I cannot obtain a sufficient money advance to procure even rations for the settlers from present date up to cooling time; this is rather disheartening. Having obtained the opinion of Sir S. W. Griffith, C.M.G., as to the legality of transferring a portion of my shares to the settlers on this estate, I tested the matter by transferring twenty-two shares to one of them, a man who has had twelve years' experience in the colony of Mauritius as a sugar-grower, and thoroughly understands the irrigation system there used; but the application made in January, 1888, was flatly refused by the Directors, Messrs. Nordley, Ironside, Kable, and Beldan. The reason given by the Directors was "that it would not be conducive to the interests of the Central Mill Company to transfer the shares to the settler." This showed a certain animus towards myself, and from that date I have ceased to interest myself in the affairs of the Company, and will not hold myself responsible for any shares in the Company, seeing the obstructions engaged in my way by the Directors has partly prevented my going into cane growing on an extended scale.

Out of the twenty settlers engaged one died, three have left after about six months' trial—two through sickness, one through not seeing a payable prospect, the remainder are still struggling on; the outcome of which, I anticipate, will be, on their part a thorough disgust at cane growing, although men, women, and children, have done their utmost in the planting, cleaning, and working their several portions of land—which they hold rent free. I have lost about £300 in consequence of the men leaving. The result of my crop, sold to the Central Mill, of 1887 and 1888, from 100 acres, was £150, and the cost of producing the same was £700—from land that had been previously cleared and ploughed—this work having been done by white labour alone. By this you will see, gentlemen, that no one can make a success of cane growing by white labour alone. So that the sooner we get a good supply of Polynesian or other cheap labour for this industry, the better it will be for all concerned, and I doubt not that an impetus would be given to this now languishing district.

I have, &c.,

J. ANTONEY.

JAMES DONALDSON, "Sandiford," has had 21 years' experience in sugar planting and manufacturing, most of the time on his own estate of "Cassada," now given up; total area of estate, 860 acres; 130 acres under cane, 3 acres under maize, sweet potatoes, and garden, and 30 acres fallow; 80 acres crushed at Homebush mill last season, yielding 450 tons of cane; about £2,600 invested in estate; expenses during 1888, £800; returns, £240; loss, £560; employed 2 Europeans and 9 kanaka overtime boys; average rate of wages paid to coloured labour, 7s. 10d. per week; total wages paid to Europeans, £137; considers that kanaka labour is much better and more reliable than any other kind for field work, having had experience of Europeans, aboriginals, Malays, and Chinamen; in some instances has found Europeans able to labour in the field, but in nearly every instance unwilling to continue at it; has never attempted any hand labour that could be done by machinery now known; cultivates about 10 acres of cane for each black labourer employed; one European if able to use the plough, horse, and hoe could work 5 acres; as a rule the kanakas enjoy remarkably good health; field work almost invariably injuriously affects the health of Europeans; cost per acre of felling and burning scrub, £4; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £1 an acre if allowed to lie for three years; his cane has suffered from rust and caterpillars; for the first change of plants was the remedy applied; for the second a line of fire; his crop of 1888 was reduced to one-third by drought, which induced a plague of grubs and white ants; has no machinery on "Sandiford"; can give no reliable information as to rate of wages paid to Europeans in the district outside of agriculture; any tropical production will grow in the district if irrigation were adopted; has found kanakas to be the most reliable labourers; has not grown any tropical produce but sugar to any extent; has grown a small quantity of almost everything, but long spells of dry weather have prevented success; believes the causes of depression in the sugar industry to be drought, low prices, and insufficient labour, in fact the sugar industry has been almost annihilated by the "no coloured labour" cry; suggests as a relief for the depression, irrigation and change to other crops, which could then be successfully grown, and also by the Government giving the planters every facility in their power; suggests as a means of promoting tropical agriculture other than sugar growing the establishment of an experimental farm which, if irrigated, would be a step in the right direction; fibre and fruit growing would then assist the small farmers, who will alone be able to get the best returns from small areas.

FRANK JAMES STEVENS, "Colton Vale," has had five years' practical experience in sugar growing; also owns small selected estate of 390 acres in the "Homebush" area; has 3.5 acres under cultivation—27 under cane, an acre of garden, and 7 acres fallow; last season 22 acres crushed at "Homebush" mill, yielding 234 tons of cane; keeps no account of quantity of sugar made; £1,400 invested in estate; gross returns for 1888, £128 14s. or 9½ per cent.; working expenses for 1888, £185 16s., all being nothing save rations for his own and wife's time; employed an average of 1½ white men the year through, and one kanaka; married couple during nine months of the year; average wages paid to coloured labour, 6s. per week besides rations (7s. 9d.) and tobacco; hospital fees, £1 10s. additional; total wages paid during 1888, £72 14s., besides rations—8s. per week for white men, and 6s. for black; is convinced that kanakas can do field work better and with less distress to themselves than the average white man of the class available for field work; new arrivals only are willing to engage for hand labour in the field, and they suffer far too much from the climate to be able to do a payable amount of work; there must always be a large amount of work, such as planting, weeding (in drills), trashing, cutting, and loading, which must be done by hand.

Has

Has never seen hand labour used when horse power could be applied; has never had black labour until last year owing to the difficulty of procuring it; should say that one European could cultivate about 5 acres, including hand labour, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c.; new arrival blacks may suffer in health more or less according to the season when employed in field work, but acclimatised hands as a rule are very healthy; field work affects Europeans to a far greater extent than blacks; has suffered severely himself from bowel complaints, though a native of Brisbane; attributes that to the great heat and humidity as he is strictly temperate; thanks, probably, to the virgin soil, his crops have not suffered from disease, the woolly aphids being the only vermin that infests the crops to any extent, and that doing no appreciable damage; grubs, rats, &c., which ravaged some plantations last year, passed his by; has no machinery except farm implements for horse power—all of local manufacture; wear and tear and renewals cost from £8 to £10 yearly; believes almost any tropical or semi-tropical product might be grown in the district, subject, of course, to fluctuations of seasons, which appear to be getting more uncertain year by year; but as every article of consumption has to compete with the produce of countries most favourably circumstanced for its production, a cheap and reliable labour supply would be a *sine qua non* to success; has grown maize, but only got one fair crop in four, the balance being utter failures. The causes of the depression in the sugar industry are briefly:—Beet sugar, bad legislation, and adverse seasons. The great increase in the production of beet sugar caused a large fall in price, simultaneously with the advent of an avowedly hostile (to coloured labour) party to power, which resulted in utter loss of confidence in, and withdrawal of capital from the industry; and, added to these, a succession of exceptionally bad seasons have produced an amount of depression almost equal to annihilation; considers the labour question to be the pivot on which the whole question turns, and while not favouring the importation of coolies, would afford every facility compatible with honest traffic for the introduction of kanakas. Improved means of production might do a great deal, and irrigation works would doubtless prove a boon to those within reach of water, but believes money so spent would be wasted unless supported by an adequate supply of reliable labour. Believes the establishment of nursery farms as projected by the Government would be a step in the right direction, and thinks these might be supplemented by bonuses on the export of articles of known commercial value, payment of same to be limited to, say, five or seven years from date of first export.

GEORGE VOYSEY, "Rose Vale," has been growing cane for eight years; total area of estate, 190 acres; 60 acres under sugar cane; 10 acres crushed last season, the rest being frost-bitten; £3,000 invested in estate, which did not pay working expenses in 1888; working expenses for 1888 about £300; employs three Europeans, one kanaka, and three Javanese; pays time-expired kanakas 11s. per week and Javanese £1 a week; total wages paid in 1888, £230; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; Europeans are able but not willing to do field work—they say it is blackfellows' work and not fit for white men; would be impossible for horses and machinery to clean between the cane; four kanakas, one European, and himself were working about 50 acres; one European using plough, horse, hoe, &c., would not be able to work any land unless he had someone to work between the cane; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; they seem to like it better than any other work; has had Europeans at field work, but they were sick half their time; cost of falling and burning off scrub, £4 per acre; impossible to stump it at the time it is burnt; has ploughed about 15 acres of scrub this year, but it had been felled and cultivated for seven years, and he was able to pull out the stumps with three horses; cane has suffered from rats, and nearly all his crop of 1888 was frost-bitten. Causes of the depression in the sugar industry—want of cheap and reliable labour, and the small farmer getting a low price for his cane; managers will not make any agreement, the farmers are afraid to put in cane, and the mills are only working one month instead of six, which must be a great loss to the planter, having to start the mill once or twice a week; suggests, by way of relief for the industry, cheap kanaka labour—say four kanakas to one white man, and tram or railway to get the cane to the mills, as the farmers have to take whatever is offered to them now.

THOMAS MILLAR, "Woodbine," has had eight years' experience in sugar cultivation; total area of estate, 136 acres; 76 acres under cultivation, 20 acres of sugar cane, 30 acres corn, 3 acres sweet potatoes, and 22 acres fallow; 45 acres of cane crushed last season; grows the cane and sells it; £1,587 invested in estate; was £100 short of paying expenses in 1888; working expenses last season, £234; employed two Europeans and two Javanese; paid 10s. per week to Javanese; total wages paid to Europeans during 1888, £104, and to Javanese, £52; considers kanakas the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans, who are not exactly able or willing to do the work; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; cultivates 25 acres of cane for each black labourer employed; one European, using plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate 10 acres; black employed in field labour do not suffer in health, but Europeans do a little; his cane has been subject to a lot of diseases, but suffering from none at present; crop of 1888 suffered greatly from want of rain; Europeans paid £1 to £2 10s. per week outside of agriculture in the district; thinks the land of the district can grow Indian corn, oats, English potatoes, sweet potatoes, and all kinds of fruits; cheap labour of any kind would be required to render their growth profitable; is growing some Indian corn and oats, but does not know the result yet. Bad seasons, cheap sugar, and want of cheap labour are the causes of the depression of the sugar industry.

ALEXANDER RICHARD MACKENZIE, "Marion Mill," has been coffee planting six years in Wynaad, Southern India, and sugar planting three years on the Lower Herbert and nine years in Mackay; total area of estate, 560 acres; 180 acres under cultivation, of which 150 acres are under cane, 30 fallow, and 50 grubbed and cleared and ready to break up; 30 acres of cane were crushed last season, and purchased cane of about 1,000 acres belonging to neighbouring farmers, which gave 60 tons of cane off the 30 acres, and 2,800 tons from the farmers' land; made 5 tons of sugar from the 30 acres, and 195 tons from the purchased cane, together with 50 tons of molasses; sold some molasses to neighbours for horse feed; made some into "siquela" for sale, and has a considerable quantity still on hand; £30,000 invested in estate; returned no interest for 1888, and has not paid working expenses for the last three years; working expenses from 1st April to 31st December, 1888, £3,766 1s. 8d., including purchase of cane; employed ten Europeans, four Chinamen, and thirty-five kanakas in the month when most hands were required; average wages paid to kanakas, £18 15s. 7d. (exclusive of hospital fees, passage, and return passage) with

with rations; Chinamen, 20s. a week with rations; total wages paid in 1888, Europeans, £566 5s. 8d.; kanakas, £561 13s. 5d., including hospital fees and return passage; Chinamen, £79 11s. 7d.—that was for the nine months from 1st April to 31st December. No Javanese or other coloured labourers were employed; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for unskilled work, and Europeans for ploughing and such like skilled work; has not employed Europeans for the unskilled portion of field work, but believes they would be willing and able to do the work if the pay was sufficiently high to induce them; has no faith in what are called "cheap whites," and does not think Europeans will be able to do much of the work now done by black labour when the land is perfectly free from stumps and horses and machinery can be used. Does all that can be done at present with horses and implements; his land is all free from stumps; employed one kanaka to 10 acres, but that is insufficient; ought to have one kanaka to 5 acres; one European could cultivate about 30 acres if able to use horse, plough, hoe, &c., but additional labour is requisite to hoe between the stools, plant, trash, cut, and load the canes; blacks do not suffer in health from the effects of any work they are called on to do, and does not know that Europeans suffer either; no disease has affected his cane, but it suffers from neighbours' cattle, frost, and drought; crop of 1888 was almost entirely destroyed by frost and drought—principally the latter; crushing engine and rollers, made by A. and W. Smith of Glasgow, cost £2,000 landed; Weston centrifugals by Tait, Mirrlees, and Co., Glasgow, cost £350; Blake's pump, made in America, cost £95. All other machinery, including three steam boilers, two vacuum pans, clarifiers, subsidisers coolers, fuel engine, battery, &c., manufactured in the colony, principally in the two local foundries; total cost of buildings and machinery, about £50,000; annual overhaul and repairs cost about £100, principally in repairs to brick furnaces; engine driver receives 35s. per week, fireman and fogleman, 30s. per week, all other mill hands, 25s., with rations in each case; believes the following articles can be grown in the Mackay district, viz.:—coffee, tea, pepper, ginger, nutmegs, and other spices; rice, castor oil, sunflower, and other oil plants, tobacco, rhea, and other fibre plants, sorghum, arrowroot, and other starch plants, such as cassava; to render their growth profitable white labour could be employed, provided freetrade between the colonies and protection against cheap labour countries were obtained; has not grown any other tropical produce in Queensland, but has been engaged in coffee planting in India for six years, and saw all the above-mentioned productions except rhea growing. Considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are bad seasons for the last three or four years, coupled with competition in the Australian markets with cheap labour countries, such as China, Java, &c.; also bounty-fed sugars; suggests for the relief of the industry the establishment of intercolonial reciprocity and protection against outside competition, and in the meantime restoring confidence by extending the time during which kanakas can be recruited until reciprocity is obtained; also reducing unnecessary expenses in connection with their introduction and employment; suggests for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing:—Firstly, reciprocity with the other colonies and protection against outside competition; secondly, the adoption of a scheme of advancing money to individual farmers to enable them to purchase and lay down irrigating plants—principal and interest to be repaid in yearly instalments. State nurseries, now established, would be of great advantage.

ROBERT GEMMEL SMITH, "Homebush Plantation," property of the Colonial Sugar Company, Ltd., of Sydney, has had four years' experience in Demerara, one year in Punjab, India, fourteen months in Fiji, and six years in Queensland; total area of estate, 9,717 acres; 3,350 acres under cultivation of which 2,351 is under cane, and the balance fallow; crushed 2,099 acres of cane last season, and 645 acres from farmers for a total yield of 1,534 tons of sugar, and 45,000 gallons of molasses which is used for manure; employs 136 Europeans, 17 Cingalese; 140 kanakas; and 257 Javanese; considers kanakas the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans, who are able but not willing, to do it; they strike when they are known to be most wanted; a machine to cut cane is the only thing he knows of that will reduce the number of black labourers now employed; uses steam ploughs, and horses driven by Europeans do all possible work between the cane rows; each black labourer can cultivate seven acres all the year round (manufacturing included); one European could work about 25 acres if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c.; but it would depend on the quality of the land and the seasons; during the first six months that kanakas are in the colony they suffer in health by being employed in field work, but not to any extent afterwards; field work does not affect the health of Europeans after they have been a year in the colony, but Europeans on "Homebush" do not work between the hours of 11.30 and 1.15 p.m. during the summer months; cane has been affected by grubs, caterpillars, and white louse; for the first, tried lime, kerosene, and destroying by hand, but made no perceptible difference, plenty of ploughing found most effectual, but they will only do damage in a very dry season; for the second tried digging deep narrow drains round the fields and killing; about 400 acres of the cane of 1888 was ploughed out, being ruined by grubs; does not know of any other tropical productions that can be grown to any extent in district profitably; has tried maize to the extent of 200 acres, but it was a complete failure; and sweet potatoes can be bought cheaper from Chinese in Mackay than they can be grown; considers the causes of the depression in the sugar industry are the big fall in the price of sugar, the cost of kanakas being nearly doubled, and unfavourable seasons; suggests for the relief of the depression the reduction of the capitation fee to £1, abolishing the hospital and fee, and letting kanakas receive firearms and trade; for other suggestions refers Commission to the general manager.

BENJAMIN LANGFORD, "Mayfield," has had sixteen years' experience in sugar growing; total area of estate, 890 acres; 20 acres under cane; 5 acres under maize, and 2 acres sweet potatoes; 17 acres of cane crushed last season; £1,000 invested in estate which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £250; employs one European and two kanakas; pays kanakas £24 each; total wages paid in 1888, £200; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work, but they are very unwilling to do anything beyond ploughing; a plough being a machine, a ploughman could, of course, keep down weeds (if taken in time) that would otherwise have to be hoed; each black labourer can cultivate 10 acres, and one European from 10 to 12 acres; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, but he does not think that any white man could stand hoeing and trashing cane in the summer season; cane has not yet suffered to any extent from disease or vermin, but corn, as a rule, is eaten by parrots, crows, and coots; cane crops of 1888 suffered from grubs but not much; believes coffee, tea, tobacco, and rice can be grown in the district with irrigation, but to render their

their growth profitable, some cheap form of labour would be required; has grown maize, which yields a very poor crop, also sweet potatoes, but was undersold by Chinamen; believes causes of depression of the sugar industry are, 1st, long drought; 2nd, dearness of labour; 3rd, low price of sugar; 4th, want of confidence of capitalists in the industry owing to the uncertainty of coloured labour; suggests for the relief of the industry, 1st, extension of kanaka labour; 2nd, freetrade with Victoria.

HENRY JOHN GOODWIN ROBINSON, "Te Kowai," has had the management of sugar plantations for twelve and a-half years; has been part owner of a plantation, and has grown cane, as a selector, for Homebush Mill; is now assisting Mr. J. Ewan Davidson in the management of "Te Kowai"; prefers kanaka labour for field work; has employed Europeans as ploughmen, and for all work done by implements; without horses, white men cannot, as a rule, stand the work during the extreme heat of summer; implements can clean between the cane rows; but there is still the weeding between the cane rows, trashing, planting, and such work which must be done by hand, and the labour must be cheap and reliable; if a European had to plant cane, prepare the land, weed the rows, and trash, does not think he could manage single handed more than 10 acres; that leaves the cutting and carting to be done for him; finds the black boys very healthy if well looked after; but there is no doubt that after a period Europeans do suffer from the effects of the climate; from observation he considers that working men get prematurely old in such a climate; cane has suffered from no disease since 1875; change of cane appears the best remedy for disease; crop of 1883 suffered from the drought, and was attacked very much by grub; outside of agriculture wages of European labourers vary from 12s. to 22s. 6d. per week; thinks fruits and fibres, and most tropical productions can be grown in the district, but the difficulty is the market; to render their growth profitable cheap reliable labour would be required; has grown no other tropical production but sugar cane; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are want of reliable labour, drought, the low price of sugar, an adverse Government led by Sir Samuel Walker Griffith; suggests for the relief of the depression—a reliable source of cheap labour, irrigation, a Government that will encourage all industries, and especially the sugar and other tropical ones, separation from the southern portion of the colony, reciprocity with the other colonies—at all events for North Queensland; suggests for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing, a good market and a cheap way of sending produce to the same, relief from the middlemen, and a good scheme of co-operation for producers to sell their produce at a payable rate, a good supply of reliable cheap labour and local option as to the colour of the labour required.

MICHAEL GEORG RÖGER, "Wellington Farm," has had three years' practical experience in cane growing; total area of estate, 120 acres; 10 acres under sugar cane and 1 acre orchard; crushed 4 acres of cane last season, and sold 5 acres for plants; sold cane to Homebush; is unable to state the amount of capital he has invested in estate, but it returned no interest in 1888; employed Europeans (self and two sons); considers kanaka labour the most suitable for hoeing, trashing, and cutting; too much field work between long sugar cane, and on hot days, will affect the health of Europeans; his cane has suffered from frost; wages paid to European labourers, outside of agriculture, 15s. to 22s. 6d. per week; has grown maize, but it did not pay at the time; considers the causes of the depression of the sugar industry are bad seasons and general depression.

WILLIAM BISSET at present leases the Avondale farm; has had six years' experience in sugar cultivation, and twenty-three years' experience of tropical agriculture in Ceylon; total area of estate, 179 acres; cultivates 35 acres (24 under sugar cane, 2 under maize, and 1 under potatoes); crushed 14 acres of cane last season; has invested £1,300 in estate; returned no interest in 1888, but a heavy loss; working expenses for 1888, £252 2s. 4d.; employed one European all the season, two Malays the main part of the season and one Cingalee; average wages paid to coloured labour 2s. per week and rations; paid in 1888, Europeans, £72, and coloured labour, £78; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work, provided kanakas can be had at reasonable wages, viz. 5s. a week; has employed Europeans at field work with most unsatisfactory results; they will not do the work, and their wages and living are too expensive considering the price obtained for the produce; when the land is perfectly free from stumps there will not be much saving of labour, as mostly all work that can be done by horses is being done at present; machinery for planting and cutting the cane would effect a considerable saving of labour; cultivates 7 acres for each black labourer employed but it depends on the season and various other causes; should think one European, if able to use plough, horse, and hoe, could not cultivate more than 10 acres, as a great deal of the work must be done by the hoe, such as cutting the weeds out from the cane stools; blacks as a rule very healthy, but during three months of the summer field work affects the health of Europeans; during these months they are not able to perform a fair day's work; has had no experience of felling and burning off scrub, but experts estimate the expense at £6 an acre; the cost of stumping the land to make it fit for the plough would be very heavy, as the trees would all have to be grubbed; does not think the crops would ever cover the extra expense; rats, bandicoots, wallabies, and a sort of white grub have affected his crops; poisoned lime and salt have been tried with success as remedies; wages paid to Europeans, outside of agriculture from £1 to 25s. a week and rations, or 29s. and 34s. per week including rations; believes the ramee fibre, cotton, aloë fibres, maize, sweet potatoes, and rice can be grown in the district, but to render their growth profitable, labour not costing more than 10s. a week, rations included, would be required; labourers in other tropical climates do not receive more than 8d. per day, including rations; has tried to grow maize and got one fair crop in two years; has tried ramee fibre, but is unable yet to give an opinion upon it; has also grown tobacco, which was a failure; believes the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are bad seasons, low prices, and high wages; in many cases the cost of production far exceeds the market value of the product. It costs the farmer from £10 to £11 per acre to cultivate and deliver a crop of 18 tons per acre at the mill, for which he receives from 10s. to 11s. per ton, or somewhere about £2 an acre; suggests, by way of relieving the depression, a more economical method of working the plantations and farms, and a class of labour that will not cost more than 10s. a week, including rations; loop railways into the sugar growing centres and more central mills; inducement to capitalists to invest money; reduction of the duty on sugar machinery; reduction of the duty on sugar going into New South Wales, and an irrigation scheme. In relation to other tropical agriculture, says: If fibre growing could get a start, a company would be formed to purchase from the farmer; the

same would apply to rice cultivation, a mill would have to be erected, which would soon be done, but the farmers have no money, and are afraid to commence a new industry in case it will not pay. Some scheme of irrigation is very much needed, and capitalists to lead in the cultivation of the land.

DAVID COXNE, "Ballinrosh," has had thirteen years' experience in sugar cultivation; total area of estate, 145 acres; 40 acres under cultivation (24 acres under maize, 5 acres sugar cane, 2 acres potatoes, and 9 acres fallow); crushed 20 acres of cane last season; made $8\frac{1}{2}$ tons of sugar or 95 tons of cane; has invested in improvements £800, which has returned no interest; working expenses for 1888, £166; employed three men (two Europeans and one Japanese); paid coloured labour at the rate of £20 per annum; total wages paid in 1888, £127; considers kanakas most suitable for hoeing, planting, trashing, cutting, loading, and Europeans for ploughing; has employed Europeans at field work, but they are not able or willing to do it when horses cannot be employed; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; one European could cultivate 10 acres if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c.; neither blacks or whites suffer in health through being employed in field work; stumping, and making fit for the plough forest land costs from £8 to £10 an acre; cane has suffered from no vermin or disease; crop of 1888 was injured by frost and drought, and only yielded $4\frac{1}{2}$ tons of cane per acre; wages paid to Europeans, outside of agriculture in the district, about £1 5s. with board; has grown no other tropical product besides sugar cane; considers the causes of the depression in the sugar industry are low prices and drought; suggests for the relief of the depression, freetrade throughout the colonies, the taxation of foreign sugars, and the reduction of the cost of introducing kanakas from the islands; suggests irrigation as a means of promoting other tropical agriculture.

JOHN EWAN DAVIDSON, "Alexandra," "Tekowai," "Peri," "The Palms," "Branscombe," and "Nebia," belonging to the Melbourne-Mackay Sugar Company, of which he is managing director: has had twenty-three years' experience in the growth and manufacture of sugar in Queensland; had previously travelled all over the West Indies, and has visited Egypt, Mauritius, Penang, Honolulu, and Louisiana, with special reference to sugar; total area of estates, 8,242 acres; 3,572 acres under sugar cane in 1888; only The Palms and Tekowai estates being worked at present; over 4,200 acres have been under cane; 2,219 acres were actually cut last season, but much of that was only fit for horse feed; made 800 tons of sugar and 36,450 gallons of molasses; used the molasses for horse feed and at the Alexandra distillery; capital invested in the estates, £301,500; returned no interest in 1888, but a loss of £16,553 11s. (cash expenses over net receipts, without interest); working expenses for 1888, £29,577 12s. 1d.; employed eighty Europeans, 320 kanakas, and from time to time a few Malays, and sometimes Chinese; wages paid to indentured kanakas, £6 per annum; overtime, kanakas, £12 to £20; Malays, 8s. per week to 2s. per day; Chinese, 18s. per week and find themselves; total wages paid in 1888—Europeans, £8,209; coloured labour, £8,530; total, £16,739; that includes importation, exportation, hospital fees, clothing, &c.; considers kanakas and Malays most suitable labour for field work. Europeans are only employed with implements: they are not willing to undertake hoeing or manual labour in the field; "Coningsby" and "Nindaroo" have imported British labourers under indenture, but they proved a failure and ran away; all the Melbourne-Mackay Sugar Company's land is free from stumps, having been grubbed and much of it steam ploughed 15 inches deep, so that the minimum amount of black labour (one to 5 acres) is now used; in full working order, one coloured labourer is necessary for every 5 acres of cultivation, with the fullest use of implements and horses; one European will do the work necessary for the cultivation of 40 acres by horses only. If he also had to do the hoeing and hand work necessary, he would not manage more than 3 acres; coloured labourers do not suffer from field work; their health is best when at steady work; they are not worked in heavy rain; stooping under the sun affects the health of Europeans; it ages men rapidly. Portuguese imported and employed at Mauritius suffered from "Albuminaria;" forest land costs from £6 to £15 per acre to clear and grub; rust appeared in cane in 1887; the cockchafer grub is also occasionally bad, and the white louse ("pou à poche blanche") infests the leaves; has tried as remedy changing the varieties of cane to hardier kinds which do not yield so much sugar; in 1888 a good many acres had the roots eaten by the cockchafer grub, but the drought and cyclone in February were the worst diseases. Cost of machinery: "Alexandra" (Fletcher, of Derby, £8,000); "Tekowai" (McCreir, of Glasgow, £15,000); "Palms" (Mirreles and Watson, £30,000); "Nebia" (Mirreles and Watson, £6,000); "Branscombe" (Mort's Dock, Sydney, £7,000); "Peri" (Mirreles and Watson, and Fletcher, Glasgow, £8,000); 10 per cent. on the value of the machinery is the usual annual allowance for depreciation; the actual outlay on repairs varies much each year; usual wages paid to Europeans, outside of agriculture, are from 17s. to 22s. 6d. per week; skilled labourers (carpenters and blacksmiths), £2 to £2 10s.; competent engineer £3. in all cases with rations and house accommodation; the tropical productions other than sugar that can be grown in this district are rice (as long as the present duty lasts) and tobacco; probably also fibres, if the manufacture is easy; and, with irrigation, fruit, coffee, and tea; no tropical crop can be grown commercially at a profit without cheap, reliable labour; has grown maize (although very uncertain) and sweet potatoes; maize runs to wood, and labour is more profitably employed on sugar when capital has been invested in machinery; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—1. The lowest prices of the century, caused by bounty-fed beetroot competition. 2. Bad seasons from 1884 inclusive—(1885 was an average season), but 1888 was hopelessly bad, and 1889 will be bad in consequence. 3. Uncertainty with regard to the future of coloured labour, paralyzing all efforts and preventing the introduction of fresh capital for the purchase of improvements for the estates. 4. The regulations of the late Government re coloured labour raised the cost of such labour and the cost of production £3 a ton when it could least be afforded; suggests for the relief of the industry—1. Apply the principle of local option to those districts desirous of introducing coloured labour. If the population desire it, put that district on an equality with other British sugar producing colonies (Mauritius, Natal, &c.) and let it have the labour it requires under proper Government supervision. 2. Reciprocity with the rest of Australia. 3. Irrigation works by Government supplying water at a cost not to exceed 5s. per 100,000 gallons. Four inches of water is the least amount required to irrigate 1 acre. One inch equal to 103 tons per acre; 100 tons equal to 22,400 gallons; 400 tons equal to 89,600 gallons; waste equal to 10,400 gallons. Each irrigation, 100,000 gallons, at a cost of 5s. Four irrigations per annum equal to £1, plus the cost of ditches, sluices, levelling, and distribution. 4. Continuation of Pacific Islanders' Labour Act with

Government

Government-recruiting station. Says, in relation to the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing, that no tropical products can be grown in Queensland to successfully compete with other countries unless they are placed on an equal footing as regards labour and price paid for it. Kanakas cost 2s. 6d. per diem; coolies, in Mauritius, 7d. per diem; in Natal, 3d. per diem; in Java, 4d. per diem; in the West Indies, 1s. per diem.

WILLIAM ARCHER, Junr., has managed the "River Estate" for five-and-a-half years; total area of estate 2,624 acres; 502 acres under plant cane, 498 under ratoons, 500 acres to plant for 1891 crop; total 1,500 acres; crushed last season 844 acres from the estate and 7 acres from farmers; made 430 tons of sugar and about 15,000 gallons of molasses—the low sugars are not yet made, but are included in the 450 tons; molasses used for horse feed; £129,685 18s. 1d. invested in estate; returned no interest in 1888, and not half the working expenses; working expenses for 1888, £15,000; employed European and kanaka labour; average number of Europeans employed during the year, 46, and kanakas 175; pays kanakas an average of £8 a year; total wages paid in 1888—

		Wages.				Ratoons.	
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
Europeans	...	3,702	1 10	...		718	0 0
Kanakas	...	1,400	0 0	...		1,754	0 0
		£5,102	1 10	...		£2,472	0 0

Prefers kanaka labour for field work; has never tried Europeans for field work, but thinks they are neither able or willing to do it; his land is free from stumps, and he is now doing as much with white labour and horse implements as is practicable; cultivates 8½ acres for each black labourer employed; one European could cultivate 5 acres if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c.; blacks do not suffer through doing field work; thinks it is the healthiest employment they can have; cannot say whether field work affects the health of Europeans, but ploughing; certainly does not; the dry season is the only thing that has injured his crops; the crop of 1888 was affected very slightly by the grub, consequent on the dry weather; cost of machinery, £19,875; buildings, &c. £10,000—total £29,875, manufactured by Mirrieles Tait, and Co., A. and W. Smith, Glasgow, and Geo. Fletcher and Co., London and Glasgow. The mill being almost new, the cost of annual overhaul and repairs would be very light—say £250; has grown no tropical produce besides sugar; the causes which, in his opinion, have depressed the sugar industry are—Mainly the uncertainty connected with the continuance of kanaka labour; and secondly, unfavourable seasons and the low price that has ruled for sugar; suggests for the relief of the industry the extension of the Polynesian Labour Act; that would, he believes, draw capital into the industry and so enable it to tide over the present depression, the use of kanaka labour to enable planters to compete with other sugar producing countries, being the security most appreciated by capitalists.

WILLIAM STEEDMAN, "Pleystove," has had fifteen years' experience in the cultivation of sugar; total area of estate, 4,000 acres, of which 600 acres are under sugar cane only; crushed 450 acres last season; made 170 tons of sugar, and about 10,000 gallons of molasses, the latter being made into rum; £85,000 invested in the estate which returned no interest during 1888, but a loss of £8,000; working expenses for 1888, £10,439 5s.; employed 24 white men (average), 120 kanakas, and 5 Javanese; average wages paid kanakas (recruits), £8 per annum; kanakas (overtime), £17 10s., Javanese, £15. Total wages paid in 1888 to all classes, £5,283 10s. 5d.; being £2,696 1s. 9d. for Europeans; £2,512 8s. 8d. for kanakas, and £75 for Javanese; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; has not employed Europeans in field work, but his experience proves that Europeans are neither able or willing to engage in field work—except of course ploughing; it is possible, but doubtful, that when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; cultivates 5 acres for each black labourer employed; one European could cultivate 8 acres if able to use plough, horse, and hoe; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, but Europeans do; his cane does not suffer from any disease to any great extent, but has been seriously injured by drought; cost of machinery, £25,000; cost of annual overhaul about £1,000; believes all tropical productions can be grown in the district, but none to pay if sugar does not, and kanaka labour would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown no other tropical produce besides sugar; in his opinion the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—1st, uncertainty of procuring kanaka labour; 2nd, competition with other countries that have cheap labour and can produce at a lower cost while they command the same prices; 3rd, bad seasons for the last three years; suggests for the relief of the industry the extension of the Kanaka Act and reciprocity with other Australian colonies; cannot offer any suggestions for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing. The difficulties of sugar growers would be exaggerated were other produce grown; all would have to compete with cheaper labour.

THOMAS SHARPE BELDAN, "Eton Range," has had sixteen years' experience in sugar growing; total area of estate 910 acres, and Mount Grahm 700 acres; has 90 acres under cane, 14 under corn, 15 fallow, and 1 acre of potatoes; crushed 10 acres of cane last season from Eton Range, and made 5 tons of sugar; has invested £600 in Eton Range and £300 in Mount Grahm; working expenses for 1888, £300; employed European labour; considers black labour the most suitable for field work; Europeans are not able or willing to do field work when horses cannot be used; does not think that Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour when the land is perfectly free from stumps; one European if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., on the land, could cultivate 5 acres; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, but Europeans do; cost of stumping forest land to make it fit for the plough £6 an acre with black labour, and £10 with white labour; cane has suffered from the kangaroos, wallabies, bandicoots, rats, opossums, grubs, and white ants, and the crop of 1888 was affected to the extent of 25 per cent.; considers that sorghum, lucerne, maize, oats, hay, tobacco, sweet potatoes, and English potatoes can be grown in the district, but to render their growth profitable black labour would be required; has grown maize (28 bushels per acre), and sweet potatoes (5 tons per acre); considers the causes of the depression of the sugar industry are taxation on kanakas, bad season, and opposition; suggests for the relief of the industry, cheap labour.

MICHAEL

MICHAEL FLOOD, "Virginia," North Mackay, has had twelve years' experience in growing sugar, tobacco, and maize at Mackay; total area of estate, 1,372 acres, of which 1,219 acres had fallen into the hands of the mortgagee in May, 1883 through inability to get a market for cane grown; £2,000 worth of cane was left on his hands contrary to agreement; at present has 10 acres third ratoons; is leaving off cane growing through the uncertainty of the market, low prices, and want of cheap labour; 10 acres of cane sold to Habaua estate last season at a price below the cost of cultivation; has been told it went 2 tons to the acre, or 20 tons; does not know how much molasses it produced; amount invested in estate, as per books, is £6,000; returned no interest in 1888 but, on the contrary, a loss of £130; by interest on loan, £1,000; rents, rates, &c.; working expenses for 1888 were only £98, as he is leaving off all work in the way of cultivation; employed white labour; total wages paid to Europeans in 1888, £57; employs no other labour; considers Polynesians the most suitable for field work, but they are not necessary for carting or working with horses generally; for ten years has occasionally employed white men in field work; they are not willing, and would not earn more than their rations at it; would not undertake to grow cane with white labour even if the men worked for rations, but prefers whites for working with horses; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, would be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; 75 per cent. of black labour is sufficient for all works; one black labourer could cultivate 8 acres, including cutting, loading, &c., but not carting; one European, using plough, horse, hoe, &c., should be able to cultivate 15 acres, but he would not be willing to plant or trash at any price. Has had men who refused to do it at 30s. per week; blacks employed in field labour do not suffer in health, and are well and happy when well treated; field labour does not affect the health of willing Europeans, but the unwilling ones say that it does, and will not plant, weed, or trash cane; average cost of falling and burning off scrub £3 per acre, by contract; will cost about the same with black labour, or perhaps 10s. less; most scrubs being stony, stumping is useless; if not stony, it is best planted with the hoe. At the end of five years all the stumps are dead, and could be removed for £1 10s. per acre; cane has been affected principally by wallabies and bush rats, but no remedies have been tried; the crop of 1888, in scrub land, was affected to the extent of about 3 tons per acre of cane, forest cane scarcely suffered at all; maize suffered to the extent of about 2 bushels per acre; wages paid to Europeans in district, outside of agriculture, stockmen, 15s. to 30s. per week; road makers, from 24s. to 28s. per week and found; considers that the following crops can be grown in the district, viz. maize, tobacco, coffee, tea, cotton, fibre, grapes, and bananas; the most profitable crop would be tobacco with the present protection; but South Sea Island labour would be required to render their growth profitable; has no faith in any other labour that has yet been tried in the district; has grown a small area of tobacco, which paid well at 1s. per lb.; the price went down to 7d. per lb., and he then left off growing; the causes which, in his opinion, have depressed the sugar industry are bad seasons, the low price of sugar, a neglect of duty through fear of the South Sea Island labour being stopped, and, above all, bad management on most of the large estates where the owners do not personally reside; knows some estates that would not pay under the present management if sugar was at £20 a ton; suggests by way of relieving the depression a limited supply of South Sea Island labour for field work only, and that the trade be placed in the hands of Government agents, as now the farmer cannot get such labour until the large planter is supplied, and then only the refuse and sickly boys, at a higher price; under present regulations kanakas are of no benefit to farmers.

Mr. Flood, further says: I beg to give it as my opinion that the only true way to relieve the farmers of this district would be by the erection of central mills, worked with a limited supply of black labour. So long as the farmer is obliged to sell his cane to the present mill owners, black or cheap labour cannot benefit his position, as the mill owner will in no case give more for the cane than it costs to cultivate it; as, for instance, if by cheap labour a saving of £3 per acre could be made in cultivation, the mill owner would give just £3 per acre less for the cane.

ANDREW HENDERSON, "Beaconsfield," has had twenty-one years' experience in cane growing; total area of estate, 800 acres; 284 acres under sugar cane, and 6 acres under potatoes and maize; 114 acres were crushed last season, from which 45 tons of sugar were made, and 1,220 gallons of molasses; molasses used for horse feed; capital invested in estate, £29,000; returned no interest during 1888; working expenses for 1888, £3,400; wages paid to coloured labour, £6, £8, £10, and £18 per annum; considers kanakas the most suitable for field work; has employed European labourers for field work, but never found them satisfactory; on several occasions has had to bring them to court for neglect of work; they have afterwards absconded, and left the district; that refers to men engaged for six and twelve months. The estate of "Beaconsfield" will not be free from stumps for many years to come, and as yet machinery has not been introduced to take the place of manual labour; sometime before the machinery on the estate was ordered a discussion was brought forward in the House proposing to stop the introduction of island labour after a certain time. That was objected to by Mr. Griffith and followers. That then gave confidence that kanaka importation would not be interfered with. During late years legislation has handicapped the importation of that class of labour, which has made it very expensive, and likewise having in view that kanaka importation will cease at the end of 1890. The low price of sugar and the small returns have also contributed to the depression.

JAMES CASHBY, "Kiloluff," has had fourteen years' experience in the cultivation of sugar cane; total area of estate, 40 acres; 10 acres under cane, and 20 acres crushed last season; 61 tons of cane sold to the Meadowlands mill for 12s. a ton delivered; capital invested in estate, £1,450; returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £429; employed 5 Europeans and no kanakas; paid a total of £200 to Europeans in 1888; considers European labour the most suitable for working horses, and kanaka labour for weeding, trashing, cutting, and loading cane. Europeans are not willing to do field work, and are not suitable; cane cannot be cultivated entirely with horse implements; 5 acres are all one European can keep in proper cultivation, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c. Field work affects the health of Europeans in wet weather; cane has not suffered from disease or vermin, but suffered severely from drought in 1888. Considers rice and coffee can be grown in the district, but cheap and reliable labour would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown no other tropical produce but sugar; drought and the want of cheap and reliable labour are the causes which have depressed the sugar industry; suggests for the relief of the depression, a sufficient supply of cheap and reliable labour, and, in case of drought, irrigation; coffee and rice both require reliable and cheap labour.

WILLIAM

WILLIAM LANDELLS, "Glenmorgan," has had eighteen years' experience in cane growing; started maize growing first with a poor result; but by growing cane at 11s. a ton with the help of a European and two boys, could make a living; total area of estate, 68 acres—28 freehold and 40 leasehold; 10 acres under cane and 1 acre under sorghum; 8 acres of cane crushed last season; sold the cane to Hyne and Co.; capital invested in estate, £900; returned no interest in 1888, but a loss of £430; working expenses for 1888, £459 10s.; employed 3 Europeans for fifty-two weeks; 1 for ten weeks; 2 for twenty-six weeks; and 1 for ten weeks; also 1 Javanese for four weeks; does not know the wages paid to coloured classes of labour, not being allowed to employ any; total wages paid to Europeans in 1888, £241 10s., and to Javanese £2; considers Europeans most suitable labour for field work with horses, and coloured labour for hoeing, planting, and trashing; has found European labour a failure; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery will not be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour because they are not reliable; the number of acres that a European working plough, horse, and hoe could cultivate would depend on the season; has seen times when 1 acre could not be kept clean; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; has employed kanaka boys for fifteen years, and never took one to the hospital, nor had a single death; field work affects the health of Europeans, they are always complaining of headache, backache, &c.; cost of felling and burning off scrub, from £3 to £5 an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough would depend on the quantity of trees; 2s. 6d. per stump is paid; cane has suffered from dry rot; out of 15 acres planted, took off 4 acres in 1888 at an average of 8½ tons per acre; 4 acres of ratoons yielded 5 tons of cane; considers that rice could be cultivated in the district with irrigation, but coloured labour would be required to render it growth profitable; has grown 4 acres of rice which was a failure for want of water; thinks the cause of the depression in the sugar industry is the long and severe drought; suggests by way of relief—irrigation, suitable labour, the dividing of large estates for central mills, and to allow central mill farmers to employ any labour they may consider best; other tropical agriculture would be affected by the difficulty of getting labour; all tropical agriculture requires cheap reliable labour.

ALEXANDER DOWNIE CARTNER, "Ashburton," has had twenty years' experience in sugar growing; total area of estate, 4,800 acres; 1,740 acres under cultivation; 1,000 acres crushed last season, from which, 360 tons of sugar were made, and 11,000 gallons of molasses; molasses used for feeding horses; £200,000 or thereabouts, invested in estate; proceeds of 1888, £8,000 less than working expenses, which were £13,592; employed Europeans, 47; Chinese, 3; kanakas, 220; Javanese, 5; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour 3s. 4d. per week, with rations, &c. Total wages paid in 1888—Europeans, £3,800; Chinese, £165; kanakas, £1,762; Javanese, £73; Europeans at contract work, £150—£5,990; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; kanakas not employed at work that can be done by horses or machinery; one black labourer can usually cultivate 5 acres, but cultivates 8 acres at present; these labourers are not always employed in cultivating; does not think that Europeans would do more work than kanakas at the work that kanakas are now employed at; ploughing, &c., is at present done by Europeans; one European might cultivate about 8 acres if he had nothing to do with cutting, manufacturing, &c.; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; health of Europeans does not suffer when doing the work they are at present employed at; cost per acre of felling and burning off scrub about £4 or £5; could not estimate accurately the cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough; would be very expensive if stumped before some crops were taken off and the roots allowed to decay; cane has been very little troubled with disease or vermin, but grubs have been troublesome in dry seasons; crop of 1888 was a little affected by grubs; cost of machinery, including erection about £40,000; manufactured in Glasgow; cost of annual overhaul and repairs about £200; could not say what other tropical productions could be grown profitably in the district; has grown no other tropical produce besides sugar; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are the low price of sugar, and the great expense of kanaka labour, exclusive of wages; the depression in 1888 was greatly increased by the exceptionally bad season; suggests for the relief of the industry a reliable supply of suitable labour.

HENRY LOELO, "Abingdon Holm," has had sixteen years' experience in sugar growing; total area of estate, 160 acres; 8 acres under cane, 6 under corn, and 4 acres sundries; crushed 4 acres last season; does not know the yield of sugar or molasses; £160 invested in estate; returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £190; employed three Europeans; total wages paid to Europeans, £150; considers Polynesian or other coloured labour the most suitable for field work; necessity compels him to employ Europeans; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; one European, if able to use plough, horse, and hoe, can cultivate 6 acres; Europeans employed in field work do not suffer in health, except during the months of December, January, and February; wages paid to Europeans outside of agriculture in the district, 20s. to 25s. per week; considers coffee, rice, spices, and cotton can be grown in the district, but Polynesian or Indian labour would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown no tropical produce besides sugar; considers the causes of the depression in the sugar industry are want of rain, bad cultivation, want of change of plants (cane); suggests for the relief of the depression the keeping out of the colony sugars grown in other countries, such as Java, Mauritius, and America; suggests for the promotion of tropical agriculture, outside of sugar growing, the introduction of capital coupled with experienced men from India, where tropical produce is widely grown.

CHARLES JOHNSTONE WILLOCK, "Rosemount," has had six years' experience as a plantation overseer, and four years on his own property; total area of estate 206 acres; 105 acres under cane, 2 acres under sorghum and sweet potatoes, and 9 acres fallow; 42 acres of cane crushed last season at the Marian Mill, and 33 acres sold for plants; cane was sold to the Marian Mill; £3,450 invested in the estate, which has not paid interest since purchased in 1885; lost heavily last year; working expenses for 1888, £520; employed himself, ploughman, and wife, and seven kanakas; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour, £16 8s. a year; total wages paid in 1888, £199; prefers kanakas for manual labour, and white men for working implements; at odd times has had Europeans in his employ, and has done field work himself when short of coloured labour, but the men could not continue long at the work, as it was in the heat of the summer; Europeans are not able, and still more unwilling to do field work: his

land is perfectly free from stumps, and Europeans do all the horse cultivation, but the planting, weeding in the cane rows, trashing, and cutting—in fact, all the manual labour must be done by cheap coloured labour; each black labourer can cultivate about 10 acres, but at present he is very short of labour and has only one to 25 acres; one European could cultivate 25 acres if able to use plough, horse-hoe, if it was cleared for him (presumably by coloured labour), provided he had not to cut and deliver to a mill, and even then he would require help when planting and weeding; blacks only suffer in health through field work when new chums, and then more from change of diet and climate than from labour, overtime boys, such as he employs, are practically never ill; field work affects the health of Europeans; considers that no man could stand more than ten years' work in district; speaks of robust men using implements and horses, but doubts if a European could work alongside kanakas for one summer; cost per acre of falling and burning off scrub £4 10s.; no scrubs in Mackay district fit for ploughing. The scrubs all lie on the north side of the river and are too hilly for ploughs; cane has been affected by wallabies and bandicoots, but to no great extent; cane was ruined by drought, cyclone, and frost in 1888; considers fibre, coffee, rice, tobacco, fruits, and nearly all spices can be cultivated in district; but to render their growth profitable, cheap coloured labour would be required so as to compete with other countries similarly favoured; thinks the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are the want of cheap coloured labour and the threatened removal of the present labour, which in itself is far more costly than that used by other sugar producing countries—and the consequent want of confidence by capitalists; a succession of bad seasons and the low prices owing to beetroot sugar competition; suggests for the relief of the depression free-trade between the colonies, and protection against other sugar producing countries; also the reduction of cost of introducing kanakas by removing useless regulations; suggests for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing increased facilities for shipping from the port; experimental farms so as to educate farmers; a Government system of irrigation; cheap, reliable labour so as to compete with other countries; and intercolonial freetrade.

CORNWALLIS WADE BROWN, "Penleigh," has grown cane since 1872, and for the last three years in connection with the Racecourse Central Mill; total area of estate, 108 acres; 12 acres under cane; 1 acre teosinte; 1 acre sorghum; 2 acres various; 12 acres ready for planting; 5 acres old ratoons; 2 acres only of cane crushed last season, yielding 12 tons weight of cane; has invested £1,600 in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; employed 2 Europeans besides himself, with various contract jobs; total wages paid in 1888, £150; for ploughing, harrowing, &c., Europeans are the most suitable; for weeding and trashing, kanakas are far the best; has employed none but Europeans for three years, but as a rule they do not care for field work such as trashing and weeding; does not think they are suitable at all. When land is perfectly free from stumps does not think Europeans working horses, and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour. The intense heat in the cane, in the weeding and trashing season is only suitable for black labour, and Europeans will not do it for long. A European, using plough, horse, hoe, &c., will not be able to cultivate one acre without help at certain times in weeding, trashing, planting, &c.; before joining central mill, employed kanakas who were always healthy; Europeans doing field work get fever and always complain of the heat and discomfort of trashing and weeding—ploughing, harrowing &c., suits them; cost of stumping scrub to make it fit for the plough about 2s. 6d. or 3s. per tree; cane has not suffered except from dry not caused by the drought; most of the crop of 1888 damaged by drought so as to render it unpayable to crush; believes that rice, coffee, tea, maize, ratoon grass, and tobacco, can be cultivated in the district, according to elevation and soil; black labour for weeding and field work, and whites for ploughing and skilled work would be required to render their growth profitable; has tried to grow corn, which was a failure, because farm too low; rice would pay with irrigation, also potatoes, sorghum, and teosinte for fodder; for the last three years sorghum and other crops have failed owing to bad seasons—first floods and then drought. The causes which in his opinion have depressed the sugar industry are a general fall in prices, cultivation of beet sugar, continued bad seasons, insufficiency of labour, both black and white, land being overworked, planting too often from the same stock, and want of irrigation; suggests for the relief of the depression—a cheap and effective supply of kanakas or other black labour to all; irrigation on such a scale as would benefit all; using the central mills for crushing the cane on the large estates as well as that of the small farmers, which would enable the planters to grow more cane; the use of tramways for this purpose; fresh importation of cane plants and more attention paid in cultivation, manuring, and drainage; also protective duties; the system of central mills is thus worked in Brazil with success; says, in regard to the promotion of other tropical agriculture, state nurseries, with a free supply of plants, if carried out as proposed would in his opinion assist very much, otherwise it rests with private enterprise.

THOMAS BAKER, "Barrie Estate," has had six years' experience in sugarcultivation; total area of estate, 2,150 acres; 150 acres under 1st ratoons, and 150 acres under plant cane; but there has been over 500 acres cultivated; 250 acres crushed last season for a yield of 574 tons of cane, which was sold to "Homebush"; mill not worked; no molasses made in 1888, sold some at 5s. a cask; £30,000 invested in estate; returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £2,598 9s. 9d.; employed 12 whites and 50 to 60 kanakas up to July; since then 3 or 4 whites and about 35 kanakas; kanakas wages about 6d. per day; total wages paid in 1888, £686 11s. 7d.; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; Europeans not able or willing to do field work; horses now do all the work that is practicable; each black labourer can cultivate 6 or 7 acres, and one European 12 acres if able to use plough, horse, and hoe; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, they improve; Europeans will not do field work; cost of stumping forest land to make it fit for the plough, £10 or £12 an acre; cane has been affected by wallabies, grubs, and rust; for grubs tried the experiment of ploughing out, and for rust new varieties of cane; crop of 1888 affected to a great extent by grubs, drought, and cyclone; cost of machinery, about £8,000, manufactured at Maryborough; wages paid to Europeans outside of agriculture in district, £1 a week; many other tropical productions can be grown in district with cheap labour, none without; kanaka or coolie labour would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown no other tropical produce besides sugar; causes which in his opinion have depressed the sugar industry are adverse legislation, depreciation in value of product, drought, unequal competition, and uncertainty in regard to future supply of labour; suggests for the

the relief of the depression more favourable legislation in regard to the requisite labour, reciprocity, and protection from outside producers who produce under more favourable circumstances; suggests for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing abundance of cheap labour.

ALFRED SMITH, the Mackay Sugar Company's Estate, "Victoria," has been six years manager of Victoria Mill, Mackay; total area of estate about 2,000 acres; 900 acres under cultivation, viz., 400 acres under cane and 500 acres fallow; 350 acres crushed last season, cane sold to Marian mill; capital invested in estate, £47,000; returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, about £3,000; employed 12 Europeans (average), 26 Chinese, 25 kanakas, and 1 Cingalee; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour, 10s. per week; total wages paid to Europeans and coloured classes in 1888, about £3,000; kanaka labour most suitable for field work; has employed many Europeans at field work on different occasions, but they are not suitable or reliable; as a rule they clear out after the first pay day; no scrub land on the estate; cultivates 16 acres for each black labourer employed (new land, deeply steam ploughed, and weeds not bad); blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health after they have become acclimatised and get use to the food; field work affects the health of Europeans, especially cutting and loading cane; no disease or vermin in cane; crops of 1888 not affected by disease or vermin; cost of machinery, about £15,000—manufactured in Scotland and the boilers in Mackay; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £300; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, about 20s. per week; almost any tropical produce could be grown in the district if irrigation was adopted, but kanaka or other cheap labour would be required to render the growth of other produce profitable. Causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—1st, legislation *re* coloured labour; 2nd, enormous expense of introducing same; 3rd, lowness of price; 4th, unfavourable seasons. Suggests for the relief of the depression—1st, introduction of sufficient black labour at a reasonable rate; 2nd, reciprocity; 3rd, irrigation.

ELIZA HENDY, "River View Farm." Her late husband had twelve years' experience in the district, and she has since carried on the farm; total area, 141 acres 2 roods; 5 acres planted, mostly with fruit trees; 2 acres of cane crushed last season; £3,000 invested in estate; no interest returned, but a loss; employed 2 Europeans and 3 kanakas; average wages paid to coloured labour, £13 a year and rations; kanakas most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans at field labour, but they are rarely able or willing to do it; does not think that when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do much of the work now done by black labour; formerly cultivated 5 acres to each black labourer employed, now none; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; anyone may distinguish between an old-time boy and a new chum by the improved physique of the former; does not think field work affects the health of Europeans; cost of stumping land to make it fit for plough, £7 an acre; crop of 1888 failed through drought principally—kangaroo rats were also rather troublesome; men working for Divisional Board receive 24s. a week and rations; almost everything can be grown in district, but kanaka labour would be required to render the growth or any produce profitable; has grown a little fruit such as mangoes, grapes, bananas, &c.; causes of the depression of the industry are—1st, low price of sugar; 2nd, want of profitable labour; 3rd, bad seasons.

THOMAS PEARCE, chairman of Racecourse Central Mill, considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are:—Competition with bounty paid sugar; high rate of interest on loans; in many instances mismanagement, imperfect machinery, and the want of modern labour-saving appliances. Local depression is chiefly from adverse seasons; three years back had an extremely cold, wet season, which also affected the following year; this last year, extreme drought. Suggests for the relief of the depression—Cheap capital as loans, and to be for periods if required, instead of as now annual, or instant thereby making the borrower subservient to the money market; reciprocity, or intercolonial free trade; irrigation also will be a great factor in the future for promotion of the sugar industry. Great stress is also laid on the question of suitable labour. Experience points to the kanaka as the only cheap and reliable labour. The Cingalese, Javanese, Chinese and Malays all have been tried and found wanting. If the kanaka could be introduced under the care of the Government, as in some other colonies, and a recruiting party stationed at some convenient centre on one of the islands, to be used as a depot for receiving and delivering, and on their arrival here to be allotted as applied for by each cultivator, and to be used only in cultivation, subject to the following restrictions:—The planter who employs not less than 25 white men at all times during the whole year, should be allowed 75 or 100 kanakas as might be considered best, and the same principle carried out with selectors; the selectors' grown-up sons being counted on the same rate as white labourers; also, that instead of the planter or selector paying down the passage money beforehand, it shall be optional to spread it over the whole term of engagement, and to be paid together with the wages at stated intervals. If some such provision could be entertained, it would greatly restore the confidence of capitalists, and help to foster the sugar industry. To thoroughly establish the sugar industry in this colony and make it a paying concern, new and much more powerful and improved machinery must be erected, and the manufacture separated from the growing of the sugar. Mills that can make not less than 10,000 tons annually, with branch railways, and portable trams, thus bringing every grower within 20 miles into communication. In conclusion, railways and tramways will be the great factors in helping the sugar industry in the near future, being quicker, cheaper, and more certain—wet or dry the mill can be always supplied.

ALFRED SMITH, the Oakden Sugar Company, Limited, has had six years' experience in sugar growing; total area of estate, 5,000; 600 acres cleared, and rented to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company; 400 cleared but not broken up; capital invested in estate, £52,000; returned no interest in 1888; considers South Sea Island labour the most suitable for field work; cost of machinery, £18,000; manufactured by Smith and Company, of Glasgow, where it remains stored, the directors see nothing to encourage them to ship and erect it.

ALFRED SMITH, "Greenmount," has had six years' experience in sugar growing; total area of estate 1,000 acres; 180 acres under cultivation; no cane crushed last season; £9,000 invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; no machinery.

BUNDABERG

BUNDABERG DISTRICT.

WILLIAM GORDON FARQUHAR, "Hummock" Plantation, has had over twenty-five years' experience in sugar cultivation; has visited plantations in South Africa and Mauritius; total area of estate, 820 acres; 600 acres almost entirely sugar cane; 1 acre lucerne; about 2 acres sweet potatoes and 2 acres of green feed; crushed 300 acres of cane last season; juice sent to Millaquin; about £18,000 invested in estate; returned 8 per cent. on estimated value of plantation in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £6,000; employed 90 Polynesians and 15 Europeans; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour, about 6s. per week; wages paid in 1888, whites, £1,400; kanakas, £1,120; considers Polynesian labour the most suitable for field work; has tried whites, but does not believe they can do the work under any circumstances; when the land is perfectly free from stumps white men using horses and machinery may do a portion of the work now done by black labour, but will decline to do the bulk of it if they can get any other employment; cultivates 5 acres for each black labourer employed, with the assistance of Europeans; all moderately healthy; kanakas improve in condition when doing field work; believes field work affects the health of Europeans, has affected his; cost per acre of falling and burning off scrub, about £5; stumping it to make it fit for the plough would cost £14 an acre if done immediately; cane suffers very much through grubs eating plants and stools; has tried as remedy picking them up after plough and scraper have gone over the ground, also light dressing of salt in cane furrows; cane also suffers from white parasite in sheath of leaf; crop of 1888 suffered severely in some parts, and not at all in others; cost of machinery, £7,000; manufactured in Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £150 to £200; wages paid to Europeans outside of agriculture in district, £1 a week and found; has heard of no other tropical productions besides sugar being grown remuneratively in district; tropical productions require as a rule tropical labour; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—the low price of sugar caused by the bounty system, and the threatening attitude of the Government towards suitable labour; suggests for the relief of the depression—repeal of the bounties; a system of irrigation; inter-colonial reciprocity and a reasonable prospect of an adequate supply of suitable labour; says in relation to the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing, that other tropical productions can certainly be grown with suitable labour, but he is not in a position to name them.

ABRAHAM PEGG, "Glenmore," has had sixteen years' experience in cultivation of sugar on a small scale for himself; total area of estate, 521 acres; 40 acres under cultivation; 12 cane, and balance maize; 4 acres additional cane planted this season; 6 acres of cane crushed last season, and remainder used for feed and plants; cane sold to mill owner at per ton; capital invested in estate is his own time and labour for many years; cannot say what interest was returned in 1888, and kept no account of working expenses; employed one kanaka besides himself and family, with occasional hired white help; kanaka gets £16 a year; considers the labour most suitable for field work, the cheapest available; has tried Europeans for field work, sometimes they will not do it, but have a try and then roll up and go; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans working horse, and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; number of acres that each black labourer cultivates, varies; number of acres that one European could cultivate, using plough, horse-hoc, also varies according to season; in a dry season one man could work 46 acres, but in a wet season it would take him all his time to work 10 acres; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; nor do Europeans any more than when doing other work; cost of falling and burning off alluvial scrub, costs about £5 an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough would be about £5; cane has only suffered from wallabies; bananas and pineapples can be grown in the district; would require for their cultivation the same labour as for cane; has grown bananas and pineapples with very fair results; cause of depression of the sugar industry—the low price of sugar.

JOHN GAYLARD, "Windsor" Plantation, has had six years' experience in Mackay and fourteen years in Woongarra Scrub; total area of estate 327 acres, of which 150 acres are under cultivation; 107 acres cane crushed last season, yielding 207 tons of sugar; capital invested in estate, £8,980; returned 5 per cent. in 1888; employed 25 white men and 50 kanakas; paid coloured labour 15s. per week; total wages paid to Europeans and coloured labour in 1888, £1,850; considers South Sea Island labour the most suitable for field work; Europeans have been tried but are not suitable for the cane field, being unwilling to do the necessary work; when the scrub lands are fully grubbed and cleared of roots and stones, Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by coloured labour; neither Europeans or blacks suffer in health through field work; cost of falling and burning off scrub, £5 an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £2 an acre; cane has not suffered from disease or vermin; machinery manufactured by Tooth and Co., Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £300; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are the high price of labour, the low price obtained for sugar, and the want of faith in and unreliability of labour in the near future, suggests for the relief of the depression extension of Pacific Island Labourers Act, which would increase faith.

RICHAUD LEE, "Sherwood," has had ten years' experience in sugar cultivation; total area of estate, 253 acres; 140 acres under sugar, 8 acres corn, and 2 acres lucerne and potatoes; 50 acres cane sold last season, and 4 acres crushed, 8 tons of sugar made; £5,000 invested in estate; returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £250 5s. 2d. (for rations); employed 17 coolies and 11 white men while crushing; total wages paid in 1888—Europeans £312, Europeans (mill hands, one month) £13, Coolies £123, total £448; considers Coolies most suitable for field work; has tried Europeans for field work, but they will not clip or trash in tall cane, or if they did they would want prohibitive wages, and say it was black-fellows' work; when land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; they will plough and scarify and work with horses; cultivates fully 10 acres for each black labourer employed; Europeans can only work with horses in the cane when it is small; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, but Europeans complain of the heat; cost of felling and burning off scrub varies; has had to pay £5 an acre; cane has been attacked by a few rats, but no disease; machinery cost £3,500 erected; some bought second-hand in Brisbane, and some in England; thinks tobacco might be grown in district, but Coolies or children would be required to render its growth profitable; has tried cotton, coffee, and tobacco on a small scale; cotton

cotton hobs the wrong time of year (in the wet season), coffee bears well, but tobacco would pay best with cheap labour; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are deterioration of the soil, dry seasons, and there being no confidence in the permanence of the labour; suggests for the relief of the depression irrigation and plenty of Coolie labour.

BENJAMIN WOCKMAN, "Ballinderry," has had over twenty years' experience in sugar growing; total area of estate, 420 acres; 69 acres under cultivation—20 acres sugar, 30 acres maize, 4 acres barley, 6 acres English potatoes, 1 acre sweet potatoes; 14 acres of cane sold to H. Palmer last season; capital invested in estate, £2,000; returned no interest in 1888; does not know his working expenses; employed 5 kanakas and 5 Europeans; average wages paid to coloured labour, £30 per annum; total wages paid to Europeans and kanakas during 1888, £500, including rations; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; white labour cannot be depended on; some Europeans will work and some will not; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; cultivates 4 acres of cane for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, and hoe, would be able to cultivate 8 or 10 acres, but it would depend on the season; field work does not affect the health of Europeans or blacks; cost per acre of felling and burning-off scrub, £5; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough is £20 an acre; cane has suffered from nothing but want of rain; wages of Europeans in district, outside of agriculture, from £1. 10s. to £2; causes of depression in sugar industry, beetroot sugar and long drought; suggests for the relief of the depression, irrigation.

ROBERT DINNIE, manager of "Sharon," has had ten years' experience in sugar cultivation; total area of estate, 700 acres; 300 acres under cultivation—viz., 250 under cane, a few acres under lucerne, potatoes, garden, &c., the balance being prepared for planting; 240 acres crushed last season, yielding 220 tons of sugar, and 9,000 gallons of molasses; £15,000 invested in the estate, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for that year about £3,900; employed 17 white men and 70 kanakas; cost of each kanaka per annum, £30 to £33, including rations, &c.; total wages paid in 1888—white men £1,260, kanakas £2,100; considers kanaka labour most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans who were not willing to do it; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans working horses and machinery, will be able to do much of the work now done by black labour; cultivates about $\frac{1}{2}$ acres for each black labourer employed; one European using plough, horse-hoe, &c., would cultivate 8 to 10 acres; neither blacks or Europeans employed in field work suffer in health; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £5 an acre; to stump it immediately after burning would cost £15 to £20; so far no disease has affected his cane; 100 acres of cane damaged by frost in 1888; cost of machinery, £8,500—manufactured in Scotland and Queensland; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £200; wages paid to Europeans outside of agriculture in district, 30s. per week; believes cotton and coffee might be grown in the district, but kanaka or other cheap labour would be required to render their growth profitable; the causes which in his opinion have depressed the sugar industry are—low price of sugar and increase in cost of labour, also falling off in the yield per acre; suggests for the relief of the depression—in continuance of the kanaka labour and free trade between the colonies; irrigation might also increase the yield; can offer no suggestions for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing.

JOHN H. HILL, "South Kolan," has had seven years' experience in growing cane, but none in sugar manufacture; total area of estate, 400 acres; 170 acres under cane, and 50 under maize; 60 acres of cane crushed last season; 1,300 tons of cane cut and sold to the Binger Company (Messrs. Gibson and Howes); £4,500 invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £700; employed 8 whites, 10 kanakas, and 8 Chinese during crushing season; paid whites 15s. to £1 per week, kanakas 10s., Chinese 1s. 6d. per ton to cart cane; kanakas are certainly the best suited for field labour, and Chinese are very good as long as on contract work; has cultivated very little with Europeans, but they are willing and able to do the work; as for cutting cane and loading drays they do not give satisfaction; 4 kanakas are equal to 6 Europeans in loading drays at day labour, but cannot say how it would be with contract work; all field labour, as far as cultivating goes, can be done with Europeans; cultivates about 10 acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate 20 to 30 acres; has had very little sickness among kanakas; field work does not affect the health of Europeans; cost of felling scrub, 35s. to 40s. an acre; cost of stumping it, to make it fit for the plough, about 30s. an acre, provided it is done four or five years after; knows of no other crop but maize that could be grown in the district in addition to sugar cane; Europeans should be able to grow maize profitably; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are low price of sugar and proposed stoppage of kanakas; says in relation to relief of the depression, the first cause will, no doubt, right itself, but the second will only be got over by cane-fields being cut up into 20-acre blocks, and worked by families; the population of the colony is not large enough for that at present, but could be tried on a few plantations.

HENRY CATHCART ARTHUR YOUNG, partner in "Fairymead," has had nine years' experience in the growth and manufacture of sugar; total area of estate, 3,200 acres; 1,252 acres under cane; 647 acres cane crushed last season; made 466 tons of sugar from cane cut on estate, and 1,034 tons from purchased cane; molasses run away; £75,000 invested in estate; returned 2 per cent. interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £25,666; employed on average 481 Europeans, and 296 Polynesians; paid in wages during 1888, to Europeans £3,415 9s. 1d., to Polynesians £2,075 7s. 10d.—these wages were paid in addition to rations being supplied; considers Polynesians the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans for horse cultivation, but they would not, in his opinion, be willing to do the work when horses could not be worked—they would not do the hand work; on the estate there are no stumps, the land being all under the plough, and all work is done by Europeans with horses that can be done. Planting, trashing where necessary, cutting, loading, and carting cane cannot be done by white labour owing to their distaste for the work, and largely increased cost; cultivated in 1888 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres of cane for each islander employed; if the work on the estate could be done entirely with Europeans, it would take a man for every 4 acres of planted cane; blacks do not suffer in health through doing field work, they improve in condition during their term of agreement; Europeans do not suffer in health through doing field work when working horses, but believes they would suffer if they did the hand work; local rate for burning

burning and felling scrub, about £5 an acre; cost of stumping to make it fit for the plough would depend upon whether it was done immediately after felling or later when stumps have had time to rot; no disease has affected cane; cane lice are numerous, but do not visibly affect returns, trashing has a beneficial effect in killing the lice; crop of 1888 was not affected by disease, but very heavy losses occur almost annually through frost; machinery, including buildings and erection, cost over £40,000—machinery principally from Glasgow; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £1,300 in 1888; tobacco cultivation has been tried with some success in district; would require Polynesian labour to produce those articles which come into competition with those produced by other countries where coloured labour is required; has only grown sugar; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—1st, heavy fall in price of sugar caused by excessive production of beet sugars under foreign bounty system, and direct competition with China and other sugar produced by coloured labour; 2nd, increased cost of introduction of Polynesians, which has advanced over 100 per cent. in eight years, and difficulty of getting them in sufficient numbers; 3rd, paralysing effect of the attitude of the country with regard to the introduction of necessary Polynesian labour which has caused the withdrawal of monetary support, and is seriously checking improvements and extension of the industry; suggests for the relief of the depression—1st, extension of the Act providing for the recruiting of Polynesians; 2nd, securing Australasian markets by reciprocity treaties or federation of the colonies; 3rd, formation of irrigation trusts under Government auspices, money being advanced at low rates of interest by Government for the carrying out of district water supplying schemes; has no personal knowledge of the growth of other tropical products than sugar, but believes that great increases in fruit growing would take place if irrigation schemes were started.

WILLIAM DAVIDSON, "Pemberton Grange," including what was originally known as "Glenmorris," has had eighteen years' experience in growing sugar cane; 380 acres under cane, 300 acres crushed last season; made 325 tons of sugar and 15 tons of molasses; is holding the molasses with a view of selling to distillery; £21,000 invested in estate; after paying working expenses and interest on mortgage, no balance was left in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £2,380, including clothing for islanders and whites, firewood, insurance, stables, fodder, &c., but does not include interest or wages; employed twenty-five Europeans and eighty kanakas; sixty-five kanakas were three-year agreement boys at £7 per year, the balance were free boys at 8s. per week and rations; total wages paid in 1888 to European and coloured labour £2,428; considers Polynesians most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans at field work, but they are not willing or able to do it when horses cannot be worked; so far as ploughing and planting is concerned, when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, but that does not overcome the difficulty of trashing and cutting; cultivates $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., on the land, could cultivate from 30 to 40 acres, leaving over one-third of the work to be still done; blacks employed in field labour suffer in health in dry seasons; Europeans cannot stand the heat and itch among the cane; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £5 an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £25 an acre, if done immediately after felling, but if left for three or four years until the stumps are rotten, £5 an acre; wallabies and scrub rats have done a lot of damage to cane; cane suffers also from a species of aphid, especially during dry weather; wallabies can, of course, be kept out with wire netting, but not rats; has not tried anything for the aphid; hard to say to what extent crop of 1888 was damaged by vermin, but altogether had about half a crop owing to want of rain; cost of machinery, £6,000, manufactured at Atlas Works, Sydney, N.S.W.; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £350; wages paid to European labourers, outside of agriculture in district, 6s. to 6s. 6d. per day; has never tried any crops other than cane, maize, and potatoes; causes which, in his opinion, have depressed the sugar industry are—the keen competition in the sugar market, caused by the introduction into Great Britain of the bounty-fed sugars; also the cheapness of Chinese labour used in connection with the manufacture of China sugars; also the small quantity of rain in Queensland; says, in relation to the relief of the depression, that Queensland sugars will never pay as they ought until intercolonial trade in that line is free. The £5 duty into New South Wales is killing, and the differential duty in Victoria is not sufficient.

LUDWIG JENSEN BREUSCH, "Hillside," formerly "Maryvale," has been 16½ years in the colony, and nearly the whole of that time has been engaged in agriculture; first for 18 months at Mackay, as a labourer, and during the last 12 years on his own farm; total area of estate 121½ acres; 20 acres under cane, 22 acres under maize, all under plough, 58 acres let on lease, of which 50 acres are cultivated with maize and worked with the hoe; crushed 4 acres last season, for which he received £26 after delivering the cane at the mill; considers the farm well worth £25 an acre; has been worked by two kanakas at 10s. per week each and tucker; considers South Sea Island labour the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work and paid as much as 25s. and rations per week, which was one-half more than the business could afford; with European labour he would not care to cultivate above 20 acres even if the labour could always be had at 15s. per week; very few good and reliable European labourers are available in district; only about 10 per cent. of them are worth 15s. and rations; the good ones become masters or clear out to where there is no competition with Coolies; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will without doubt be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; cultivates 20 acres for each black labourer employed; one European if able to use plough and horse, hoe, &c., and if a good man could work 30 acres, or even more of cane, but the cane would not be trashed, which he thinks is not necessary; blacks do not suffer from field work, but they do suffer to a great extent from want of proper care in the matter of diet, dwellings, and swampy places of residence; field work does not affect the health of Europeans where the breeze can get at them, but it does in high and close fields like matured maize and sugar cane; cost of felling and burning-off scrub £5 an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough would be too expensive if done before three years after it is felled; four or five years after the scrub is felled stumping can be done very easily; cane has not suffered from any disease, but the maize suffers sometimes a little from blight; not much, because the land is high and dry; crop of 1888 not affected at all by disease or vermin; wages paid to European labourers, outside of agriculture in district, from 6s. to 7s. per day without rations; cannot state the causes which have depressed the sugar industry, and suggests no remedy.

NIELS

NIELS CHRISTIAN JENSEN, "Stonby," has had no experience in the cultivation of sugar or other tropical produce; total area of estate 70 acres; 3 acres under maize, 25 acres grass paddocks, 3 acres under cane; 35 acres let on lease, and nearly all under maize; considers Europeans most suitable for field work; has employed them, and thinks they are willing and able to do the work when horses cannot be used; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will certainly be able to do a great deal of the work that is done by black labour; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health unless compelled to be out during wet weather; they no doubt suffer in health from other causes, such as improper food and residence on swampy ground; field work does not affect the health of Europeans; cost of felling and burning-off scrub £5 an acre; cost of stumping to make it fit for plough would depend upon how long it had been felled and burned; cane has suffered from no disease, but the maize suffers at times from blight; wages paid to European labourers, outside of agriculture in district, 5s. to 7s. per day without rations; cannot state the causes which have depressed the sugar industry, and suggests no remedy.

LORENZ JACOBSEN, "Caspian Farm," has been over seventeen years in the colony, and for the greater part of the time has been engaged in agriculture, first on a sugar plantation at Mackay, and in later years on his own farm; total area of estate, 134 acres; $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres under cane, 18 acres under maize, and half an acre of bananas; 50 acres all under cane, let on lease to Buss and Davidson; $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres of cane crushed last season for which he received £20, the mill owners cutting and carting; considers the farm worth about £20 an acre; employed two Europeans only at from 12s. to 15s. per week; considers Europeans the most suitable for field work, but not for cutting cane; has employed scarcely any other labour, and thinks Europeans able and willing to do the work when horses cannot be worked; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans working horses and machinery will certainly be able to do much of the work now done by black labour; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate 20 acres; blacks do not suffer in health from field labour, but from want of proper care in the matter of food and house accommodation; field work affects the health of Europeans when the cane has grown so high or close as to shut out the breeze; cost of felling and burning-off scrub £5 per acre; paid £4 per acre for stumping scrub two years after it had been felled and burnt; cane has suffered from no disease, but maize sometimes attacked by blight, for which there is no known remedy; a kind of grub attacks and kills the bananas; wages paid to European labourers, outside of agriculture in district, 5s. to 7s. per day without tucker.

WILLIAM GEORGE MOORE, "Ashton," total area of estate, 640 acres; 40 acres under cultivation, viz., 36 under maize, 4 under sweet potatoes, and 2 under lucerne; crushed 15 acres of cane in 1887, but last season being very dry turned his cattle into the cane to save their lives; in 1887 had 30 tons of juice, yielding 2,240 gallons per ton; employed Europeans and kanakas; considers Europeans most suitable for horse-work and kanakas for hoe-work; Europeans are able to do field work, but not many are willing; very often saying, "We don't use these tools at home." When the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; one European if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., would be able to work about 10 acres; Europeans do not suffer in health through doing field work, and blacks suffer no more than whites; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £5 an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, about £5 an acre; if stony, about £10; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, about 6s. per day of eight hours.

LUDOMIR STANICZ, "Sea View," has had ten years' experience in the cultivation of sugar cane, and fifteen years in cultivation of maize; total area of estate, 211 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres; 185 acres under cane, 2 acres under sweet potatoes, 2 acres under lucerne and oats; 90 acres crushed last season; made 98 tons 10 cwt. 8 qrs. sugar; juice sold to Millaquin refinery; capital invested in estate, £8,145 10s. 6d., which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £1,909 8s. 4d.; employed 5 Europeans and 31 kanakas; paid kanakas £39 and rations; total wages paid in 1888 to Europeans and coloured labour, £1,580; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; has employed European labour in field work, and found them able but not willing to do the work among the cane when horses cannot be used; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery will not be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, excepting ploughing, harrowing, scarifying, &c., which is now done; cultivates about 6 acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate 10 or 12 acres partly only; neither Europeans or blacks suffer in health when employed in field work; cost of felling and burning off scrub, £5 an acre; cost of stumping, to make it fit for the plough, £5 an acre, and up to £20 an acre, if attempted immediately after the scrub is burnt; cane has not suffered from disease or vermin; crop of 1888 affected by drought to the extent of 100 tons of juice; cost of machinery, £3,300, manufactured in Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £80; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, £1 up to £1 5s. per week and found; considers coffee may be grown in district if there is a large amount of capital in hand, so that a man can wait until a return is obtained, but black labour would be required to render its growth profitable; has grown no other tropical production but sugar to any extent; considers the causes of the depression in the sugar industry are—expensive labour required to form a plantation and grow sugar, the drought which has to be contended with, competition with sugar grown in countries where there is abundance of cheap labour, exorbitant interest charges; suggests as remedy for the depression—1st, Government to protect sugar industry from ruin; 2nd, Government to allow planters to have kanaka labour with less interruption; 3rd, Government to establish agricultural bank under Government control, where planter or farmer in need can borrow money at the rate of 5 per cent. or 6 per cent., payable in 15, 20, or 30 years, by annual payments—principal and interest on security of property; 4th, Government to pass a Bill of restriction on all money-lenders, as it is on the Continent, that is that 5 per cent. interest only be charged by them; 5th, irrigation.

JOHN CRICHTON STUART McDONALL, manager, "Kalbar" plantation, has had two years' experience in the cultivation of sugar cane on the Macleay River in New South Wales, and twelve years on the Mary and Burnett Rivers, Queensland; total area of estate, 1,006 acres (360 acres scrub and 646 acres forest); 330 acres under cultivation, viz., 325 acres under sugar, $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres under sweet potatoes, $\frac{1}{2}$ acre lucerne, and

2 acres oats and garden; about 160 acres crushed last season for a yield of 107 tons of sugar and about 500 gallons molasses; 4th sugars not dried yet; expects to sell molasses to distillery; £15,000 invested in estate, which did not pay working expenses in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £2,735 12s. 5d; employed 13 Europeans and an average of 64 kanakas, not including 15 percent sick; 82 kanakas employed during the year, but some only for six months and two for only three weeks; paid £7 2s. average wages to 82 kanakas; total wages paid in 1888, Europeans, £652 2s. 6d., and kanakas, £582 7s.; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; employed Europeans on the Macleay River, New South Wales, where white labour was very plentiful (1874), at 15s. per week and find themselves; they were quite able and willing for the work when they had to do it or starve. In Queensland, where white labour is scarce, and what is imported the wrong sort, they will not do the work. The great difference is that black labour is reliable and white labour decidedly not; even when horses are used hand labour is always required in the rows to clear round the stools, especially in alluvial land, which gets much dirtier owing to floods, &c.; when the land is perfectly free from stumps about half the number of black labourers would do if Europeans could use horses and machinery; cultivates about 5 acres for each black labourer employed, including mill work, wood getting, &c.; one European, if able to use plough horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate 20 to 30 acres, according to the soil, provided other labour was available for chipping; 10 to 15 acres, if he has to keep the whole clean; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, and field work does not affect the health of Europeans any more than other work; cost per acre of felling and burning scrub, from £3 10s. to £5, according to the scrub, and with kanakas; with Europeans, £5 to £8; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £25 to £30 an acre when green; cane has been affected by a fluffy, pinkish aphid; no remedy tried except tramping high, which displaces them, and if heavy rain comes kills them, as they have no shelter; vermin did no visible damage to crop of 1888; cost of machinery, about £9,000, manufactured by John Walker and Co., Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £40; wages paid to European labour in district, outside of agriculture, from 15s. to 20s. per week; thinks rice, coffee, cotton, and many other productions, can be grown in district, but kanaka labour, or its equivalent, would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown a small flat of rice, but owing to dry weather it was a partial failure; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—over production of the article in foreign countries where the labour is much cheaper than in Queensland; low price and dry weather; says, in relation to relief of the depression, that with a supply of present labour and fair seasons so as to give the quantity, can still make the industry a success, and suggests intercolonial freetrade and higher import duty; says in relation to the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing, that with irrigation and reliable labour anything can be grown.

ROBERT CRICHTON M'DONALL, "Cuba," has had nineteen years experience in the cultivation of sugar cane; total area of estate 160 acres; 71 acres under cane; 50 acres crushed last season; 35 tons sugar made, and 1,200 gallons molasses. Expects to sell latter for distilling purposes; £3,500 invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses, for 1888 (indirectly), about £600; employed 12 Europeans, 6 Chinese, and 7 kanakas; wages paid, 30s. per week to Chinese (not found), and 9s. and found to kanakas; total wages paid in 1888, Europeans, £76 10s.; Chinese, £45; kanakas, £81 total, £202 10s. Considers kanakas the most suitable for field labour; has employed Europeans in field labour; they are able to do it, but do not care about the work; the cost of the labour is prohibitive, that is for chipping &c., where the land is perfectly free from stumps.—Europeans working horses and machinery will certainly be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; cultivated in 1888 about 4½ acres for each black labourer employed; if a European would do the work, is of opinion he could work 10 acres of cane, including cutting and carting to the mill a reasonable distance, and using plough, horse, hoe, &c.; neither blacks or Europeans employed in field work suffer in health; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £5 an acre on an average; to stump it and make fit for the plough directly after burning-off would be costly; cane has not suffered from any disease; cost of machinery £1,700; manufactured in London, Sydney, and Maryborough, (Queensland); cost of annual overhaul and repairs £30; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, 5s. per day; has had no experience of other tropical productions, but thinks cheap labour would be required to render their growth profitable; thinks the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are low price of sugar, increased cost of labour, and falling off in yield per acre of cane; says in relation to remedy for depression that free-trade between the colonies would give considerable relief.

FREDERICK WILLIAM GLADWELL, "Mabba," North Bundaberg, has had fourteen years' experience in the cultivation of sugar cane; total area of estate, 238 acres; 206 acres under cultivation, viz. 192 under sugar, 10 under corn, 2 under potatoes, 2 under lucerne, 32 pasture, cleared and stumped; crushed about 150 acres last season for a yield of 60 tons of juice; capital invested in estate £18,400, which returned no interest in 1888, but a large deficit; working expenses for 1888, £1500; employed 6 Europeans and 30 kanakas; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour £30; total wages paid to Europeans and kanakas in 1888, £1,400; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; from his experience European labour is a failure except for horse driving, horse hoeing, and ploughing; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horse machinery will not be able to do more than has previously been done; cultivates about six acres for each black labourer employed; impossible to cultivate cane without the hand hoe; blacks do not suffer in health on account of the work they are employed at; a great part of the field work affects the health of Europeans, but never could get Europeans to do the work sufficiently long to enable him to decide the question; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £6 an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough would depend on the nature of the work, but should think from £10 to £20; has not discovered any disease in his cane; cost of machinery, £4,000; manufactured by John Walker & Co., Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £50; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, 30s. to 48s. per week; does not know of any other tropical production other than sugar that would pay to cultivate; has grown maize at a great loss; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are: bounty allowed on foreign sugar exported, and adverse legislation to kanaka labour; suggests by way of remedy, countervailing duty on foreign sugar and reciprocity.

JOHN HENRY EDWARD BERTHAM, "Sommerville," (Walter Adams, owner) has had eight years experience in the cultivation of sugar cane; total area of estate, 240 acres; 120 acres under cane, and 2 acres under bananas; 110 acres crushed last season; made 165 tons of sugar, and 1,800 gallons of molasses, the latter thrown away; capital invested in estate, £10,401 10s., which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £2,774; employed 8 Europeans and 30 kanakas; paid on an average £15 12 per annum to coloured labour; total wages paid in 1888 to Europeans and coloured labour, £233 13s.; considers kanaka labour most suitable for field work; Europeans employed in field work are certainly not willing to do it when horses cannot be worked; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do some of the work now done by black labour, but not cutting or trashing; cultivates 4 acres for each black labourer employed; Europeans, if able to use plough, horse, and hoe, could cultivate no land profitably; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, but Europeans do; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £5 an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £12 an acre; cane has not suffered from disease or vermin—crop of 1888 suffered to a very trifling extent; cost of machinery, £5,219 17s. 6d.; part made in Glasgow, and part in Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £100; has grown no other tropical productions in addition to sugar cane but bananas; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are: First, Government interference with kanaka labour, causing capitalists to hold aloof; and second, beet and bounty-fed sugars in competition; suggests as remedy for the depression, repealing or extending the Act re kanaka labour, and endeavouring to bring about reciprocity with the Australasian colonies; suggests for the promotion of other tropical agriculture, a system of irrigation.

JOHN CLARK, "Ashgrove Plantation," has had twenty years' experience in sugar and maize cultivation; total area of estate 103 acres freehold, and 260 leasehold; 150 acres under sugar cane and 10 acres under maize; 130 acres crushed last season; 223 tons of sugar made; £6,000 invested in estate; which returned 11 per cent. in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £1,892; employed 5 Europeans and 20 kanakas; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour, £10 10s. per year; total wages paid in 1888—Europeans, £300; kanakas, £210; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; Europeans not able and willing to do field work when horses cannot be used; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; cultivates about 8 acres for each black labourer employed; 1 European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate about 15 acres; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, but Europeans do among the cane; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £4 10s. an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £40 an acre, if done immediately after felling; cane has suffered from grubs; found no remedy; about 5 acres of crop of 1888 affected; cost of machinery £2,000 erected; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £20; wages paid to European labourers, outside of agriculture, in district, from 5s. to 6s. per day; thinks the only crop besides sugar that could be grown in district is maize, and kanaka labour would be required to render its growth profitable; has grown 50 bushels of maize to the acre; considers the cause of the depression in the sugar industry is uncertainty of labour; suggests as remedy for depression, kanaka labour.

CHARLES FAULKNER, "Woodlands," has had seven years' experience in the cultivation of sugar cane; total area of estate, 372 acres; 350 acres under sugar cane; 5 acres under maize; 6 acres under potatoes; 150 acres crushed last season, yielding 80,000 gallons of juice; £10,000 invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; total working expenses for 1888, £3,488; employed 4 to 18 Europeans, 8 Chinese, 52 kanakas; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour, 14s. per week; wages paid to Europeans, kanakas, Chinese, &c., during 1888—Europeans (wages and board) £760 16s., Chinese £52 14s. 7d., kanakas (wages) £640, kanakas (passage) £577 7s. 6d., rations and clothing £740 10s., total £2,771 8s. 1d.; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans only as ploughmen; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; cultivates 5 acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., on the land, could cultivate 20 acres; neither Europeans or blacks employed in field work suffer in health; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £5 an acre; cost of stumping and stoning it to make it fit for the plough, £7 to £8 an acre; cane has been attacked by rats; about one-fourth of the crop of 1888 affected by frost; cost of machinery, £3,200, manufactured in Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £150; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, about 6s. a day; thinks tobacco might be grown in the district; has grown no other tropical production besides sugar; thinks the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are bounty-fed sugar, duty on sugar in New South Wales, and over legislation.

CHARLES WILLIAM BUSS AND JOSEPH SWEETING PENNY, trading under the style of Buss and Penny, "Ashfield,"; C. W. Buss ten years and J. S. Penny five years' experience in sugar cultivation; total area of estate, 260 acres; 185 acres under cane; crushed 160 acres last season; made 215 tons of sugar and about 10,000 gallons of molasses; molasses still in stock waiting for distillery to commence operations; capital invested in estate, £10,000, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £3,300, inclusive of cost of erection of mill; employed 17 Europeans and 45 kanakas; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour, £9 a year; total wages paid in 1888 to Europeans £1,800, and to kanakas £400; consider kanaka labour decidedly the most suitable for field work; consider Europeans quite unsuitable for field work—they require six or eight times the wages of a kanaka and do no more work, they are also unreliable and the supply is limited; when the land is perfectly free from stumps and stones, Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, with the exception of trashing and cutting, and it is these two particular operations that the white man has the greatest objection to; cultivates about 4 acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., would probably be able to cultivate 10 acres, but he would be unable either to trash or cut the 10 acres; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; ordinary field work, such as ploughing and horse driving, does not affect the health of Europeans; cost of felling and burning off scrub, £5 to £6 an acre; cost of stumping and stoning it to make it fit for the plough an additional £5 per acre; cane has not suffered from disease or vermin; cost of machinery, inclusive of mill buildings, £6,000; made in

in Sydney, Aberdeen, and Glasgow; cost of annual overhaul and repairs about £200; wages paid to European labourers, outside of agriculture, in district, 6s. to 7s. per day; thick tobacco can be grown in district, but cheap and reliable labour would be required to render its growth profitable; have grown no other tropical produce besides sugar. Consider the causes which have depressed the sugar industry in Queensland are—1st, adverse legislation, harassing restrictions placed on coloured labour, and prospects on abolition of same; 2nd, the drought; 3rd, over production and a consequent fall in prices all over the world. Suggests for the relief of the depression—retention of present cheap labour, or a similar class in its place.—Indian coolies, for instance; a good irrigation scheme, and a reciprocity treaty with Victoria.

WILLIAM MURRAY COX HICKSON, "Rubyania," has been for eight years manager of sugar plantations; total area of estate, 1,500 acres; 450 acres under sugar cane; 384 acres of cane crushed last season, yielding 320 tons of sugar and 14,000 gallons of molasses; molasses at present in stock, awaiting erection of distillery; capital invested in estate, £30,000, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £5,500; employed 14 whites and 70 kanakas; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour, £6 per annum to agreement kanakas, and £16 per annum to overtime kanakas; considers Pacific Island labour the most suitable for field work; two years ago endeavoured to employ European labour for field work, but after a fair trial had to give it up and resort to Chinese; Europeans will not do the work required for the proper cultivation of cane; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, ploughing by Europeans will then be resorted to in lieu of kanakas with hoe, but machinery will not clean cane in the row; cultivates 8 acres (including the manufacturing and mill work) for each black labourer employed; one European should cultivate 12 acres, with plough, &c., but would refuse to do other necessary work; field labour does not affect the health of blacks in the least, but has no doubt it would affect the health of Europeans if they did the work required of them; cost per acre of felling and burning off scrub, £5; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £15 to £20 (the latter on stony land); cane has been affected by *poir blanc*; has tried thrashing as a remedy; frost affected crop of 1888 to a large extent; cost of machinery, about £10,000 when erected; principal portion imported from Glasgow, and part obtained from Maryborough (Queensland); cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £120; wages paid to European labourers outside of agriculture, in district, from 6s. to 8s. per day; fruit could be cultivated in district where necessary water could be obtained, and where frost would not affect it. Considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—1st, the low prices caused by the rapid expansion of beet sugar industry under the bounty system; 2nd, severe competition in these colonies of sugars imported from Java, China, and Mauritius, grown by cheap black and other alien labour, and which sugars are forced into the markets by the action of bounties; 3rd, cost of kanaka labour, which has during the last ten years increased 100 per cent; 4th, fact of clause 11 of "*The Pacific Island Labourers Amendment Act of 1885*" not being repealed; 5th, repeated droughts. Suggests for the relief of the depression—1st, reciprocity between the Australian colonies, and protection against the world; 2nd, repeal of clause 11 of "*The Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1885*," which would give greater confidence to those engaged in the industry, and better security to capitalists for investment; 3rd, better administration and removal of harsh and needless regulations under "*The Pacific Island Labourers Amendment Act*," especially in regard to the shipping clauses, and allowing vessels to recruit at islands now prohibited; 4th, legislative action authorising the lending of large sums of money, and trusts to be formed for the purpose of irrigation in those districts where a sufficient quantity of water can be obtained, repayment of loans to be made at long dates.

EDWARD TURNER, "Sunnyside" plantation, has been cultivating sugar for eight years; total area of estate 230 acres; 230 acres under cultivation, and 210 acres under cane; 110 acres crushed last season; sent the juice to Milaguin; £11,150 invested in estate; cleared £700 last year after paying all expenses; working expenses for 1888, £2,000; employed 7 Europeans and 45 kanakas; total wages paid in 1888—Europeans, £588, and kanakas £1,420, including everything; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; Europeans able but not willing to do field work when horses cannot be used; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, European working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; when he employed 15 kanakas for five years had little sickness and no deaths amongst them, but since employing double that number has had both; field work does not affect the health of Europeans; cost of felling and burning off scrub, £5 per acre; cane subject to white grub in dry weather but not affected if there is sufficient rain; cost of machinery £4,000; wages paid to European labourers, outside of agriculture, in district, 7s. per day; considers the cause of the depression of the sugar industry—the dry seasons; suggests irrigation for the relief of the depression and for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing.

NOAKES BROS., "Burnett" and "Springhill" plantations, seventeen years' experience in sugar cultivation; total area of estate, 560 acres; 500 acres under sugar cane; 300 acres crushed last season; sold cane to Milaguin; £25,000 invested in estate, which returned 10 per cent. interest on account of stand-over crop; working expenses for 1888, £3,500; employed 70 islanders and 9 Europeans; paid to kanakas in 1888, £2,500, including return passages; and a total of £3,500 to Europeans and kanakas in 1888; consider kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; have employed Europeans at field work, but cannot depend upon them; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; cultivate about 7 acres for each black labourer employed; number of acres that one European using plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate would depend on the season—15 acres in a fair season; blacks employed in field work do not suffer much in health; field work does not affect the health of Europeans if they will work; cost of felling and burning off scrub, £5 per acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £15 per acre; cane has been affected by rats, bandicoots, and wallabies; have tried as remedy shooting and burning; 25 acres of crop of 1888 affected by hail storms and frost; cost of machinery £11,000; manufactured in Maryborough by John Walker and Co.; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £250; consider the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are, foreign competition and possibility of coloured (kanaka) labour being abolished; suggest for the relief of the depression reliable labour and increased duty on foreign sugars.

RICHARD JONES, "Tegege," has had eighteen years' experience in the cultivation of both maize and sugar; total area of estate 300 acres, 250 acres under cane, 8 acres under potatoes, and 5 acres under lucerne; 200 acres crushed last season, yielding 253 tons of sugar; ran the molasses into the river; capital invested

invested in estate £15,850; returned $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888 £2,940; employed an average number of 15 Europeans and 54 kanakas; wages paid to coloured labour £1,080, and to Europeans £1,456; considers kanaka labour the most suitable for working amongst the cane, and white men for ploughing, scarifying, and harrowing where land has been stumped; has tried Europeans at field work, but finds them to be dissatisfied; they will only stay till they get a few pounds to take them elsewhere, especially when they are most wanted, in crushing time; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans will be able to work machinery amongst the cane; cultivates $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres of cane for each black labourer employed; 1 European, if able to use the plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate 7 acres; finds the blacks employed in field work healthy as a rule, but when the cane gets about 4 feet high Europeans say it is too suffocating to work amongst it; cost of felling and burning-off scrub £4 10s. to £5 an acre; should say cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough would be £20 an acre, but has had no experience; cane has not suffered from any disease; cost of machinery, £5,250 f.o.b. in Glasgow; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £200; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, from 5s. to 7s. per day; considers tobacco and arrowroot can be grown in district; considers the cause of the depression in the sugar industry is the bonus given by other countries; suggests for the relief of the depression, federation of the Australian colonies to prevent beetroot-sugar being imported into the country.

JAMES CRISTESEN, "Kalkie," has been thirteen years farming at "Kalkie," principal crop, maize; has had yearly undercultivation for the past six years from 10 to 50 acres of cane; total area of estate, 100 acres; 15 acres under cane, 35 acres under maize, 1 acre under potatoes, 1 acre under lucerne, 1 acre under bananas, 47 acres pasture; crushed 20 acres last season; employed 27 kanakas at 5s. per week; total wages paid in 1888, £40; has employed Europeans in field work but cannot afford to pay the wages they demand; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour in the early stages of the sugar crop; neither Europeans or blacks suffer in health through doing field work; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £4 10s. per acre; almost impossible to stump scrub land until it has been felled at least three years; maize has suffered from blight.

JOHN YOUNG WALKER, JOHN MCBEAN WALKER, and MATTHEW WILSON WALKER, "The Poplars" and "Hybla," have had twenty-five years' of observation and inquiry, and seven years' experience of sugar-growing; total area of estates, 87½ acres and 140 acres; 60 acres and 120 acres under sugar cane; 40 acres and 80 acres crushed last season; sent to Millaquin 60 tons and 120 tons juice; prefer Polynesian labour for cane-trashing and cutting; have employed European labour in field work, but Europeans are not able or willing to do it when horses cannot be worked; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, with the exception of trashing and cutting; cultivate about 8 acres for each black labourer employed; an important portion of the necessary work Europeans could not and would not do; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, but field work affects the health of Europeans; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £4 10s. per acre; cane has not suffered from disease or vermin; drought reduced the return of 1888 by one-third; cost of machinery, £1,500; manufactured at Kirkaldy; machinery just erected; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, 6s. to 8s. per day; have tried no other crops in addition to sugar cane, except maize; consider the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are a succession of bad seasons, and uncertainty as to the future supply of subsidiary labour; suggest for the relief of the depression, irrigation and legislative security in respect of the requisite labour.

AUGUSTUS FURLING BARTON, "Mon Repos," six years since he began sugar growing on the plantation, and has watched the action of others in growing both sugar and cotton in the Wide Bay and Bundaberg districts ever since the cultivation was first begun; total area of estate, 950 acres; 450 acres under cane, and about 30 acres under plough in preparation for cane; 10 acres under garden, sweet potatoes, &c.; total, 490 acres; about 200 acres cane crushed last season; all sold to neighbouring mills, Fairymead, Windsor, Duncraggan, and Mr. Faulkner's, the last two being only crushing mills; cannot supply statistics of results; £50,000 invested in estate; in consequence of heavy expenditure in 1888 on alterations and erections while converting single crushing plant into double crusher, cannot say what rate of interest was returned on the working expenses; employed 41 Europeans, 90 kanakas, and 9 or 10 Chinese during cutting time; paid to kanakas under three years' engagement, £6 to £9 per annum; to overtime re-engaged boys, £15 to £18 per annum; to ticket boys from 10s. to 15s. a week; to Chinese, for cutting cane only, 30s. a week and find themselves; total wages paid in 1888—to Europeans, £3,707 and rations; to Chinese, £60 without rations; to kanakas, inclusive of introduction, food, clothing, &c., £3,196; or a total of £6,963. A considerable proportion of the wages set down for Europeans has been for mill erection works, and cannot be taken as an annual expenditure, but then, again, if the mill was at work for sugar making for six months, it would approximate to that; considers that if the kanaka can be got at a reasonable rate he is the most suitable class of labour for sugar growing in Queensland; his wants are few, he is tractable, and his labour is in every way suitable and reliable, which white labour can never be; has employed Europeans in field work, but only to a limited extent; has found them willing to take to it when hard up for a temporary means of livelihood, but they soon tire of it, and are therefore an unreliable class of labour, as they will leave the work of the cane fields at any time for any other class of work; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will not be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, for the following reasons: horses and machinery will never cut and transport cane without abundant manual labour; a large staff of hands must therefore be kept for the cutting season, which, in good years, lasts from five to six months, and which hands would be available during the rest of the year for all the other operations in the field; cultivates about 5 acres for each black labourer employed, but that includes clearing, stumping, and stoning new land; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate from 10 to 12 acres if the land was free from stumps and stones, but he would require plenty of assistance at planting and cutting time; at present his lands too full of stumps and stones to be worked by the plough; blacks do not suffer in health on account of the field work, which appears to suit them admirably; they sometimes suffer in health on their first arrival, and they sometimes arrive in a consumptive condition, when they generally either die

or recover completely; does not think that field work affects the health of Europeans any more than any other outdoor work; white men generally knock off before they have been long enough at it to suffer from the heat and want of air in the cane field; cost of felling and burning off scrub depends upon whether the firewood is saved for the mill; if the wood represents a fair value when cut into cord wood, the cost would be reduced to almost nothing, but if the wood is not realised upon the usual contract price is from £4 to £5 per acre, according to the quality of the scrub; cannot say the cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough; never heard of it being done at the beginning; the usual practice is to plant between the stumps which disappear in three or four years, as scrub wood generally decays rapidly, say from £20 to £30 an acre; cane has been affected by *poux blanc*, or louse, which is not considered of much importance; it increases in hot, dry weather, and the best remedy is trashing and plenty of rain; crop of 1888 suffered from insufficient and unequally distributed rainfall and from frost in some places, but not to any great extent; cost of machinery about £20,000, inclusive of freight; manufactured by Mirrlees, Tait, and Watson, Glasgow; Robert Harvey and Co., Glasgow; George Fletcher and Co., London; and many small details from Maryborough foundries; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, inclusive of insurance, £500; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, £1 a week, including food and lodging; considers fruit, cotton, and tobacco can be grown in district, but they are not to be depended upon without irrigation; with irrigation, both fruit, such as mangoes and pineapples, and tobacco could be grown to perfection in the rich soil of the Woongarra Scrub; also tea and coffee on the slopes of the Hummock; on a small scale these articles could be grown by farmers and their families on small holdings, but on a large scale some reliable class of labour other than European would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown fruit of various kinds with very good results, but for this the market might soon be overdone; also coconuts, but not yet in bearing. The causes which, in his opinion, have depressed the sugar industry are—1st, the uncertainty of the continuance of a reliable and sufficient labour supply; 2nd, the drought; 3rd, the low price of sugar; 4th, a vexatious system of harassing the planter or other employer of Polynesians both before, during, and after their introduction into the country; 5th, the prohibition against the use of kanakas for any labour other than sugar growing. The planters now have much trouble in keeping themselves supplied with corn for their horses, and have a far higher price to pay for it than they would have if the farmer was allowed the use of kanakas the same as themselves, and as a planter he thinks it unfair that the farmer who supplies him with corn should be handicapped by having to pay a higher price for labour than he pays himself; suggests as a means by which the industry can be relieved from the depression, and for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing: 1st, irrigation; and 2nd, a continuance of cheap and reliable labour, confined to certain districts if necessary.

HANS BOCK, Parish of South Kolan; total area of estate, 84 acres; 72 acres under cultivation, 34 acres of which are under cane lately planted, the rest under maize, except a small patch of sweet potatoes; £1,050 invested in estate, which did not pay working expenses in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £150, of which about £80 was paid for stumping; employed chiefly white men; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour, 12s. a week and found; total wages paid to all classes in 1888, about £150; thinks white labour the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work and they are able and willing to do it when horses cannot be worked; one European, working horses and machinery, will do as much work as ten kanakas; his European ploughman worked from April up to the end of the year and cultivated 72 acres; blacks employed in field work suffer in health sometimes; does not think that field work affects the health of Europeans; cost per acre of felling and burning-off scrub, £4 to £5; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough from £1 10s. to £2 per acre; maize has suffered from blight; second crop of 1888 was totally destroyed; considers the cause of the depression of the sugar industry is drought; says, in relation to relief of the depression, "By all means let us have irrigation, and there will be no more depression of the industry."

KENNETH GRIFFITHS BUCHANAN, representing the firm of Buchanan and Denny, "Oakwood Plantation," total area of estate—Oakwood 585 acres, Camp Island 40 acres, total 625 acres; 340 acres under cane; 150 acres cane crushed last season for a yield of 416,759 gallons of juice, sent to Millaquin refinery, and which produced 183 tons 7 cwt. 3 qrs. 6 lbs. of sugar; £17,000 invested in estate, which failed to pay expenses in 1888; working expenses for 1888, about £1,980; employed a monthly average of 13 Europeans and 44 Polynesians; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour—three-year agreement islanders, £8 to £9 per annum; time-expired islanders, £13 10s. to £21 per annum; total wages paid in 1888—Europeans, £543 12s. with rations; Europeans £96 8s. without rations; Polynesians, £395 with rations; total, £1,034 15s. Considers Polynesians the most suitable for field work, as they are the most reliable; has employed Europeans in field work for ploughing and horse-hoeing, and has done most of his cane carting with them; thinks it would be impossible to get the men to stick to the field work for any length of time, as, although ploughmen will remain with him for years, the horse drivers, such as they are, never care for the work for any time, and is constantly called upon to look for fresh hands during the season; wages for horse drivers 20s. per week with rations; his experience of working unstumped land is very limited, having only about 40 acres to work, but as far as he has seen, thinks that new scrub lands with stumps has far less weeding to be done in it than lands under the plough, and the European ploughing between the cane is often very apt to take grass in on his plough from the headlands, which is really difficult to eradicate; cultivates 6 to 7 acres for each black labourer employed; one European, working plough, horse, hoe, &c., might possibly cultivate 5 acres; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; islanders at the expiration of their agreement seem healthier and stronger than on arrival; field work does not affect the health of Europeans, but they require a spell from time to time; stumped the whole of his land on commencing work, by contracts varying from £3 to £7 per acre; cane has been affected by a white louse which seems harmless; whole crop of 1888 was badly frosted; has expended £4,700 on a crushing plant manufactured by Mirrlees, Watson, and Co., of Glasgow; cost of annual overhaul and repairs very trifling; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, carpenters, 7s. to 10s. per diem with rations, engineers 7s. to 10s. per diem with rations; tobacco has been tried in some parts of the district, though cannot say with any satisfaction, the seasons and labour being against it; Polynesian labour would be required to render its growth profitable; considers causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—fall of price in sugar; poor crops, in consequence of droughts and frosts;

frosts; and the uncertain feeling with which financial institutions, and outside capitalists view the industry with regard to the labour question; suggests for the relief of the depression, intercolonial freetrade, a system of irrigation which ought to be assisted by the Government, and a field for recruiting labour which would be cheap and certain and free from strikes: no tropical, or in fact any, agriculture could be carried on without a more certain rainfall than has been known in the district of late years.

ANGUS GIBSON (Gibson and Howes), "Bingera," manages estate; has been cultivating tropical and other produce since 1863, cane principally since 1867 (or twenty-two years' experience in cane cultivation); area of estate 2,658 acres; 1,150 acres under cane, 6 under sweet potatoes, 6 under garden and orchard, and 6 acres under maize—total area cultivated 1,168 acres; 766 acres crushed last season; 100 acres crushed for farmers last season; made 1,670 tons sugar and about 30,000 gallons molasses, some of which was pumped over the land, the balance being stored in tanks (unsaleable); £73,000 capital invested in the estate, which returned 84 per cent. in 1888, and 5 per cent. for depreciation; working expenses for 1888, £18,378 11s. 8d.; employed 98 Europeans, 8 Chinese, 200 kanakas; average wages paid kanakas £11 7s. 1d. cash, miscellaneous payments on account kanakas £16 14s. 1d. per head, total cost per head per annum £28 1s. 2d.; total wages paid to all classes, 1888—£12,600 11s. 1d.; unhesitatingly says that kanakas on agreement are the most suitable labour for field work; but that Chinamen on contract are first-class workers; has employed all classes of European labour in field work and finds that a few can and will do all kinds of work in the field, but that two-thirds will not give a fair day's labour, and they say "white men should not be expected to do it," and they will not; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans, working with horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; cultivates from 5 to 6 acres for each black labourer employed, including cutting and loading cane on the truck and drays for the mill; one European could go over a good bit of land with the horse and hoe, but would not stoop to do the chipping and trashing in the cane, that work would require to be done by a kanaka, so could not say how many acres one European could cultivate if able to use the horse, plough, and hoe on the land; his experience is that kanakas, as a rule, improve in physique during the three years employed in the field; when Europeans have to labour like kanakas in the field their health is affected; falling and burning off scrub costs £5 an acre, but his scrub is light; if stumped would cost £15 an acre; after five years' standing and working it would cost £3 to stump land and render it fit for the plough; his cane has suffered from vermin, wallabies, rats, &c., from unoccupied land, grasshoppers, cane louse (more especially in dry weather); for the latter, trashing has been tried, and wire netting fences have been tried for wallabies, and have been more or less effectual; frost was his greatest enemy in 1888, and by it they lost a third of their crop; this was caused principally by the flood of the previous year; machinery and buildings cost £40,000, and was manufactured in England and Scotland; the tramways, waggons, and implements cost £5,000; annual overhaul and repairs costs about £2,000; cannot say what wages are paid outside of agriculture in the Bundaberg district, but there are a large number of timber-getters; thinks that bananas, grape vines, pineapples, oranges, maize, sweet potatoes, and many other tropical plants could be grown in the district, and with the exception of maize could be grown profitably with European labour, and these labourers would work; has grown sweet potatoes, and has had a return of 30 tons per acre; considers causes which have depressed the sugar industry are, costliness in preparing plantation and erection of machinery, which is usually one-third over estimate; time involved before any return is received on capital spent; want of sufficient knowledge on part of employer and employed, both in the mill and on the land; severe frosts, droughts, and floods; extra cost of island labour through harsh enactments, causing want of confidence on part of money-lenders, and hence limited funds; excessive competition with cheap labour—made sugar of Mauritius, China, Fiji, Java, &c., caused by heavy bounty-fed article in home markets; heavy charges of commission agents, &c., for sale of sugar. Suggests for the relief of the depression—1st, united action by the Australasian Governments upon the Imperial Government, pointing out how unfair it is to encourage the bounty system, with a request to put a stop to it at once; 2nd, Australian treaty by free trade among the colonies and protection against the world, but for the present reciprocity with Victoria and South Australia, by interchange of products which would conduce to advancement of each colony; 3rd, Government aid for a system of irrigation; 4th, extension of kanaka labour for a further term, or until the fiscal arrangements of the colonies are so modified that a price can be obtained for the commodity that shall enable the industry to give a return on capital, which will create renewed confidence in its stability. Suggests for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing—1st, system of irrigation; 2nd, find markets for products grown, by introduction of jam (and other products) and tobacco factories; 3rd, competent men employed by Government to lecture in the different centres of agriculture.

JAMES PRINGLE, "Bonna," has had eight years' experience of sugar cultivation; total area of estate 2,485 acres; 200 acres under sugar cane, 2 acres under lucerne, and 1 acre under sweet potatoes; 196 acres crushed last season for a yield of 270 tons of sugar; molasses used for horse feed and some run to waste; £11,297 invested in estate, which just paid working expenses and interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888—wages and rations £2,489 14s. 6d., and interest, repairs, &c., £1,472 19s.; employed 40 kanakas, 17 Europeans during crushing and 8 during off season; paid kanakas under original agreement £6 a year; under yearly agreements £18; total wages paid in 1888—to Europeans £964 8s. 1d., and to kanakas £926 19s. 7d.; Polynesians most suitable for field work; has never employed Europeans in field work, except in conjunction with horses; when land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery can certainly do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, but they cannot do it all; there is always a lot of hoe work after the horses have done their best, as well as trashing and cutting; cultivates 5 acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., on land could cultivate 30 to 35 acres in favourable season; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health except in very dry or very cold weather; has had no sickness amongst Europeans employed in field work; cost of falling and burning off scrub £5 to £7 per acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for plough varies with description of timber, and whether stumps are allowed three or four years to rot—should say from £5 to £15 per acre; no disease in cane; cost of machinery, £5,000, manufactured chiefly at Union Foundry, Maryborough, and partly imported; cost of annual overhaul and repairs under £100 a year; wages paid to European labourers in district—sugar boilers £3, engine drivers 50s., firemen 30s. per week; considers

causes

causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—the serious fall in market value of sugar and uncertainty about the labour question; suggests for the relief of the industry—intercolonial freetrade, which would no doubt help considerably, and a clear and unmistakable settlement of the labour question.

ANNE GREATHHEAD, "Hlopewell" plantation, has had nineteen years' experience in sugar cultivation; total area of estate, 205 acres; 192 acres under cane, 3 acres under sweet potatoes, and the rest grass; 172 acres cane crushed last season, yielding 525 tons of sugar; molasses pumped away; £12,000 invested in the estate, which returned 5 per cent. interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £6,324 10s. 9d.; employed 12 Europeans and 55 kanakas; average wages paid to kanakas, £20 per annum; total wages paid in 1888 to all classes of labour, £2,374 18s. 3d.; kanakas are the most suitable for field work; when they are well treated they are always willing to work; has employed Europeans in the field, but from experience finds they are not able to do the work of trashing or working in the cane; they will do nothing with the exception of the plough and horse-hoe work; cultivates 4 acres to each black labourer employed; one European would work 10 acres of cane with plough, horse, and hoe for about three months of the year; he will not stop any longer in the cane as he usually says it is too hot; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; they suffer from dysentery and asthma; Europeans employed in field work generally seem unable to stand the excessive heat; cost per acre of felling and burning-off scrub, £5; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £2 10s. per acre four years after the scrub is felled and cultivated; cane has suffered from rats and baidicots; has tried no remedies; cost of machinery, £8,250; manufactured by N. Tooth and Co., and Macoenie; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £400; thinks coffee, tobacco, cotton, and bananas can be grown in district; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are the uncertainty of reliable labour, and the low prices of sugar, owing to the heavy duties in neighbouring colonies; suggests for the relief of the depression, suitable and reliable labour; thinks sugar cane the only crop suited to the district, and if it fails the district will fail also.

JAMES CRAN, "Duncraggan," has been engaged for fifteen years in the cultivation of sugar cane in Queensland; total area of estate, 1,287 acres; 1,100 acres under cane, and 10 to 12 acres under sweet potatoes; 700 acres of cane crushed last season; cane juice representing 800 tons of sugar, and 200 tons purchased from neighbours; no molasses; £50,000 invested in estate, which returned 9 per cent. in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £7,050; employed 160 kanakas, 50 Chinese, and 38 Europeans; Chinese on contract earned £1 10s. per week; kanakas received 11s. 4d. per week, and Europeans 28s. per week, including rations; total wages paid in 1888—to Europeans £1,450 (not including rations), to Chinese £328 8s. 1d., and kanakas £1,000, not including cost of introduction, rations, clothing, &c., which would bring the amount up to £4,600; kanaka labour, without a doubt, is the most suitable for field work, being more reliable and less likely to interfere with European labour; has tried Europeans at field work without success, excepting so far as the actual horse work is concerned; they will not do the trashing, cutting, &c., and say it is only fit for black fellows; they frequently leave at a moment's notice, and if forced by agreement to remain will make employer glad to ask them to go; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; they can do a good deal of cultivation between the rows, but there will always be a great deal of hard work, even in the cleaning of the cane, which is after all only a small matter compared with other work; cultivates 7 acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., might cultivate 20 acres, but that merely means the cultivation between the cane rows, which is very little compared with other work; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; working in the cane affects the health of Europeans; cost per acre of felling and burning off scrub, from £4 to £5 per acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough from £10 to £15 per acre, immediately after felling, but from 4 to 5 years after, the cost is reduced to say £1 10s. per acre or less; cane has not suffered from disease much, but a great lot of young cane, and in fact ratooners are attacked by a large white grub, which kills the plants; has had men following the plough to kill the grubs, but it was a very expensive remedy and only fairly successful; about 25 acres of crop of 1888 ruined; cost of machinery, £20,500; double crushing plant manufactured by Geo. Fletcher and Co., London and Derby; small single crusher by Tooth and Co., Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs about £150; thinks tobacco is the only tropical production other than sugar that can be grown successfully in district, and kanaka or some equally reliable labour would be required to render its growth profitable; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—competition with bounty-fed sugars, high rate of wages paid, and irregular and insufficient rainfall; suggests for the relief of the depression—1st, the repeal of the Act passed to prohibit introduction of kanakas after 1890, so that suitable labour might be assured, and protection against the outside world; says white labour will never do plantation work—has no hesitation in stating that, after experience of sixteen years and very many attempts to adapt that labour to the work; the district is eminently suitable for sugar growing if a cheap and reliable labour is at hand.

MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT.

JAMES CRAN, "Tindah," has had sixteen years' experience of sugar cultivation in Queensland; total area of estate, 1,200 acres; 280 acres under cane, 9 acres under sweet potatoes, 10 or 12 acres under oats; 180 acres cane crushed last season; juice, representing 150 tons; no molasses as juice is sent to central factory, Yengo; £21,000 invested in estate, which returned a loss in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £1,000; employed 50 kanakas and from 18 to 20 Europeans; average wages paid to kanakas, £30 per annum, including cost of introduction; total wages paid in 1888—to Europeans £912 and rations, to kanakas, £2,100; prefers kanaka labour for field work; has employed Europeans in field work; they will do the horse work but not the chipping, trashing and cutting; when the land is perfectly free from stumps does not see that Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do more work, except cleaning between the rows, than they do now; cultivates about 6 acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., might work 15 acres, but that would only be the simple cleaning between the rows (and this is done by white labour as all the land under plough); there would still be the chipping, trashing, cutting, &c., to be done, all of which is done by kanaka in his six acres, and this work white men will not do; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, but field work affects

affects the health of Europeans; cost of falling and burning off scrub, from £4 to £5 an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £10 to £12 per acre if done immediately after felling, but in four or five years most of the stumps decay and the cost is then small; cane has not been affected by disease since rust swept the fields some years back; cost of machinery, £9,000; one mill manufactured by John Walker and Co., and the other by Geo. Fletcher and Co.; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £120; thinks bananas, pineapples, mangoes, &c., can be grown in the district, but the local demand is limited and shipping does not pay; to render their growth profitable, cheap and reliable labour would be required—kanakas; if cost of introduction was reduced; considers causes of depression of the sugar industry are—high cost of labour, irregular rainfall, and competition with bounty fed sugars; suggests for the relief of the depression—the repeal of the Act prohibiting the introduction of kanakas after 1890, and means devised by which that labour can be introduced at less cost with a regular supply, protection against bounty fed sugars, and irrigation; knows of no labour so suitable for carrying on the industry, and one which interferes less with white labour than kanakas; every kanaka introduced to work on sugar plantations makes work for European labour.

ROBERT MCGUTHAN, "Whallalla," has had ten years' experience in the cultivation of sugar cane; in 1888 leased Walhalla Plantation, but owing to employment of Europeans and to depressed state of the sugar industry was forced to cease operations; closing also caused by a European setting fire to the cane through smoking in the field; £5,000 invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888 about £700; employed 25 Europeans and 12 kanakas; paid coloured labour 7s. 6d. per week; prefers kanakas for field labour as they are the only reliable labourers; has employed Europeans in field work, but they are neither able or willing to do it; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, if they have machinery that will trash and chip and cut the cane; cultivates about 7 acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, and hoe, would work not more than 7 acres, as a good deal would have to be done by hand; blacks employed in field work sometimes suffer in health; field work affects the health of Europeans; when with Messrs. Cran Bros. has seen white men, under agreement, who could not do the work; they dropped down in the field from the heat of the sun, and their work was only slumped in comparison with the work done by kanakas; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, 15s to 20s. per week; thinks that the bounty-made sugar (German) has been the chief cause of the depressed state of the industry; also uncertainty of labour and bad seasons.

JAMES CRAN, "The Island," has had sixteen years' experience in sugar cultivation in Queensland; total area of estate, 253 acres; 230 acres under cane, 2 acres under bananas, and 5 acres under sweet potatoes; 200 acres crushed last season; juice, representing 230 tons, sold to central factory (Yengarie); £12,000, invested in estate; which barely paid expenses in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £3,000; employed 20 Europeans and 45 kanakas; wages paid to kanakas, £30 per annum, including rations, cost of introduction, &c.; total wages paid in 1888—to Europeans £900, to kanakas £1,600, including rations; considers kanakas the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work; they will do the horse work, but say other work is only fit for black fellows; they are thoroughly unreliable, and leave at a moment's notice; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, may do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; in fact they do now the cleaning between the rows, but that represents a very small portion of the work in the cane field; cultivates about 6 acres for each black labourer employed, but they do the whole of the horse work, with white ploughmen, &c., on the plantation; one European, if able to use horse, plough, hoe, &c., could work 15 to 18 acres, but that would only mean the plough work, and would leave the heaviest of the work, such as trashing, cutting, &c., to be done, which he has often tried to get Europeans to do but without success; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; field work affects the health of Europeans, trashing and even cutting, which is nearly always done in hot weather, certainly injures their health; cost per acre of falling and burning off scrub, £4 to £5 per acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough would probably cost £12 per acre more, unless time is given (say five years) to let stumps decay, when the cost is small; no disease in cane since the rust year, when all cane in district was killed; cost of machinery, £3,600; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £100; thinks bananas, pineapples, and mangoes can be grown in district; kanaka or other reliable and cheap labour would be required to render their growth profitable; has not grown any other tropical productions besides sugar to any extent, but merely for home consumption; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—competition with bounty fed sugars, high cost of labour, uncertain supply of labour, and irregular seasons; suggests for the relief of the depression—the repeal of the Act prohibiting the introduction of kanakas, and means devised by which that labour can be introduced at less cost than at present with a regular supply, protection against bounty-fed sugars, and irrigation; says that in his experience, extending over sixteen years as a sugar grower, has never found labour so suitable for carrying on the industry as kanakas, because they interfere so little with European labour, and every kanaka who is introduced to work on sugar plantations makes work for European labour.

JOHN MITCHELL, "Iindah," has been for seven years overseer on estate; 200 acres under cane, 2 acres under garden, 14 acres under oats, and 10 acres under maize; 90 acres cane crushed last season; sugar manufactured at Yengarie; employed 40 kanakas and 5 Europeans; average wages paid to coloured labour £7 per annum; thinks kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; Europeans quite able to do field work, but consider it beneath them; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, provided the land is not too much broken and seasons favourable to a steady growth; cultivates about 5 acres for each black labourer employed, but more could be cultivated with no frost, floods or drought; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate 12 to 20 acres, on good level land, keeping it clean and doing the necessary amount of ploughing; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health if free from disease, and if they have good food and water; field work affects the health of Europeans, because they smoke and drink water, &c., to excess; rust has affected cane slightly owing to impoverished condition of land; crop of 1888 only harmed by flood and by extra quantity of nut grass; machinery manufactured in Ballarat and England; cost of annual overhaul and repairs about £50; wages paid to European

European labourers, outside of agriculture, in district, 6s. per diem. but many are working at much less; district is suitable for fruit growing; kanaka labour would be required to render its growth profitable; has grown good crops of grapes, pineapples, oranges, &c.; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—land always under one crop, drought, floods, and difficulties unforeseen, such as have arisen through ignorance of legislators; suggests for the relief of the depression—irrigation, and an immediate decision as to description of labour, with assistance in procuring machinery to assist in field work; says that tropical agriculture, outside of sugar growing, can be assisted by growers being able to dispose of all varieties of fruit at a profitable price.

JOHN GARTIE has had twenty-one years' experience of sugar cultivation; considers white and kanaka labour the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work, and they are able and willing to do it when horses cannot be used; Europeans can do all labour with the exception of trashing; cultivates $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate from 20 to 30 acres; field work does not affect the health of blacks, although fever patients have been received into hospital from plantations; cane has suffered from a sort of fleshy or horny parasite, which settles round cane joints, and which trashing cures; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, 5s. 6d. to 8s. a day; considers grapes, bananas, and all vegetables can be grown in district; white labour would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown profitably sweet potatoes, vegetables, and artificial grasses; causes which, in his opinion, have depressed the sugar industry are: 1st, sudden fall in price of sugar from £22 to £14 per ton; 2nd, the continual replanting of land with the same crop; 3rd, trying to make land give produce without ever giving the land anything to assist its productive properties; 4th, the continuous in-breeding of cane; 5th, the great rise that has taken place in the price of kanaka labour during the past four years; 6th, trying to cultivate more land than the capital or labour is capable of doing; suggests for the relief of the depression: the free import of all Australian grown sugar into all Australian colonies; finds that vineyards give the best return for capital and labour expended in district, and if farmers could be induced to take up land (even if on red volcanic soil) when by erecting windmills or cheap water pumps they would be assured of water, has not the slightest hesitation in asserting they would be repaid fifty-fold.

PERRY BIDDLES, "Bryum," has had fifteen years experience in sugar cultivation; total area of estate, 350 acres; 70 acres under sugar cane, 40 acres under corn, 60 acres under other crops; 20 acres cane crushed last season; 12 tons sugar made, and 1,500 gallons of molasses; sold molasses; £4,500 invested in estate, which did not pay interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £187 17s.; employed 8 South Sea Islanders, 4 Europeans, and 6 extra hands during crushing; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour, 10s. per week; total wages paid in 1888 to all classes, £337 10s. Considers South Sea Islanders the most suitable for field work; has employed European labour on field work, but there is no reliance to be placed on it; Europeans are able but not willing to do the work; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery will certainly be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; cultivates 8 acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., would cultivate about 10 acres; does not think that field labour affects the health of either whites or blacks; cost of falling and burning off scrub, £4 to £5 an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £15 to £20 an acre; frost is the only thing that has affected the cane; lost two-thirds of crop of 1888 by frost; cost of machinery, £1,500; manufactured in Glasgow and Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £18 10s. for the last eight years; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, 4s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. per day; thinks tobacco, cotton, arrowroot, bananas, and oranges, can be grown in district; reliable labour would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown bananas, oranges, arrowroot, and tobacco, in a small way; they will all pay interest on money invested; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are: 1st, the fall in price; 2nd, the deterioration of the land; 3rd, the uncertainty of labour; 4th, the great difficulties placed in the way of investors in sugar obtaining the only reliable labour that has presented itself—viz., South Sea Island labour; suggests for the relief of the depression free trade in the colonies; is of opinion that tobacco would pay well, but it wants some inducement for people to start growing it; the great majority of cultivators are too poor to try it in a large way; believes a good plan would be for the Government to take in hand and work Government district farms all over the colony.

ROBERT HENRY ANTILL, "Antigua," has been for twenty-seven years in the Bundaberg district, and for four years managing the estate; total area 1,600 acres; 300 acres under cane; crops of last season allowed to stand over; annual working expenses, about £4,000; when working, employed about 60 kanakas, and from 15 to 20 white men; paid to coloured labour, £6 and £9 per annum, and to overtime boys, 10s. per week; last year nearly all hands were discharged, and the crop allowed to stand over; after taking the crop off this coming season the plantation will be closed; amount usually pays to white men is about £750 per annum, and to kanakas, £400 per annum; no other coloured labour has been employed; for hoeing, cane cutting, trashing, &c., prefer kanakas next to Chinese; has only occasionally employed white men in field work, and never found them willing to stay more than a few weeks; they will not work during December, January, and February; a man with a horse-hoe will do twelve times the amount of weeding that a kanaka will, but trashing, cutting, loading, and planting will always have to be done by hand; now that so little firewood is used, and so much scarifying and ploughing done, kanaka labour is reduced to a minimum, and the number required for crushing filled up by white or any other labour available; cultivates 5 to 6 acres for each black labourer employed; during the first years' work blacks employed in field work are subject to dysentery during the hot weather; Europeans also suffer from diarrhoea and dysentery in hot weather; cost of falling and burning off scrub, £5 per acre; cost of stumping to make it fit for the plough, £3 10s. per acre if done three years after being felled, cane has been affected by pink lice, but not to any great extent; rats and bandicoots gnaw the cane, and cats and carpet snakes keep them down; cost of machinery, probably about £10,000; made by Mirreles, Tait, and Watson; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £100; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, from 15s. to 20s. per week, and found; has grown and manufactured tobacco in district for three years, but found the climate not suitable; considers the causes of the depression of the

sugar

sugar industry are: large production of beet sugar; competition with countries growing sugar with cheap labour; continued droughts; and increase in cost of kanaka labour; says in relation to the relief of the depression: droughts may be partially overcome by irrigation, in which the Government may be induced to help by lending money and striking a water rate in those localities where irrigation is feasible; the bounties are practically being abolished, which will cause a slight revival in price in the world's market; if kanaka labour be encouraged and the cost per annum lessened, by making the agreement for five years instead of three, and at the end of that term the kanaka be compelled to re-engage or return to his island, there is still hope of the industry re-establishing itself; while the doubt still remains as to the action which the Government will take on the abolition of black labour next year, all capital will be withheld, and the plantations irrevocably abandoned; any action taken must be immediate, and of such a nature as to restore the confidence of capitalists.

PETER RICHARDSON, "Alford," has had twenty-five years' experience in sugar cultivation; total area of estate, 500 acres; 130 acres under cultivation; 80 acres cane crushed last season; 60 tons of juice sent to the refinery: £10,000 invested in estate; which returned no interest in 1888, owing to drought, frost, &c.; working expenses for 1883, £1,300; employed 30 kanakas and 5 white men; average wages paid to coloured classes of labour, £22 per annum; total wages paid in 1888—overseer, £78; two ploughmen, £65 each; blacksmith, £78; kanakas, at £22 each; total, £946; considers Polynesian labour the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work, but finds great difficulty in getting them to take kindly to it, or to do any disagreeable work in the sugar house; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, but nevertheless must keep a full staff of Polynesians, as could not depend on white labour, either for trashing or the more important work of getting the crop off; intimates between 4 and 5 acres for each black labourer employed; one European could plough and cultivate between 30 and 40 acres, but a great deal of hand and hoe work would be required after that; neither blacks or whites suffer in health through doing field work; cost of falling and burning off scrub, £1 to £5 per acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, from £6 to £8, according to the age of the stumps; cane has suffered from no disease; suffered severely from frost in 1888; cost of machinery, £1,500, manufactured in Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £30; wages paid to carpenters and blacksmiths in district, outside of agriculture, about 30s. a week and found; thinks maize, grapes, pineapples, oranges, and sweet potatoes can be grown in the district; considers the cause of the depression in the sugar industry is—the large quantity of refined and marketable sugar introduced from Java and China. This sugar a few years ago was sent home unrefined. Mauritius also sends a large quantity of sugar here now, owing to the depressed state of the sugar market in England, caused by the immense quantities of beetroot sugar from the Continent; droughts and bad seasons have also injured the industry; suggests for the relief of the depression some system of reciprocity with the other colonies; the extension of kanaka labour, the reduction in price of introducing them, and facilities given by the Government to irrigate in localities where it can be done to advantage; thinks tropical agriculture could be greatly assisted if the Government were to establish an experimental farm somewhere on the coast in the northern district, where coconuts, sea-island cotton, and rice could be tried; if coconuts can be grown to advantage, their cultivation will eventually become a great industry in the North, as little labour is required for the manufacture of the oil.

RICHARD HENRY MAUND HALL, "Aurora," has been overseer, vacuum pan boiler, manager, and owner from June, 1875; total area of estate, 300 acres; 68 acres under cane, 18 acres under maize, 1½ acres jetania, 1½ acres potatoes, 1 acre garden, 6 acres fallow; total, 95 acres; 53 acres cane crushed last season; 25 tons sugar manufactured at Yeugarie; £6,000 invested in estate, which returned a loss in 1888; working expenses for 1888, about £561; employed permanently, 2 European married couples and 14 Polynesians; during crushing season employed 7 Europeans and 3 kanakas extra; wages paid to coloured labour under original agreement—£6, £9, and £12 per annum, and to overtime boys 10s. to 12s. per week; total wages paid in 1888—Europeans, £187 9s. 9d.; kanakas, £103 17s. 6d.; total, £291 7s. 3d.; considers Polynesian labour the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work; they are certainly able to do the work, but it being monotonous and irksome, they remain at it only so long as necessity compels them: all his land is stumped; would employ one labourer to 8 acres when land is under plough, probably requiring extra labour at certain times; has 1 ploughman with 2 horses to every 35 acres; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health; has had to remove them from wet lands during wet months; new arrivals (Europeans) suffer from dysentery and sunstroke when employed in field work; they cannot stand work in heavy cane during the wet months; cost of falling scrub, £2 to £2 15s. per acre, and of burning off, 10s. to 30s. per acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, about 20s. per acre after the land has been five years under cane, but has known some to cost £16 per acre; cane has not suffered from vermin or disease; cost of machinery, £1,800, manufactured by Tooth and Co., Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs inconsiderable; thinks fibres might be grown in district, but Polynesian or Asiatic labour would be required to render their growth profitable; considers causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—competition with continental bounty-fed beet sugar; increased cost of labour; impending cessation of black labour; unfavourable seasons of 1885, 1886, 1887, and 1888; general want of confidence felt by banks, capitalists, and planters, owing to the Government's breach of faith with those engaged in the industry; suggests for the relief of the depression—repeal of Act threatening cessation of recruiting, withdrawal of harassing regulations re recruiting, and revision of Polynesian Act. These may tend to restore confidence, but is of opinion that it will require many years of judicious legislation to do so completely; suggests, by way of promoting tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing, ensuring to those desirous of embarking therein a supply of reliable labour.

JOHN CLARKE, "Eaton Vale" has had twenty years' experience in sugar growing; total area of estate, 430 acres; 200 acres under cane and 30 acres under maize; crushed 150 acres last season; juice sent to refinery (900 gallons per acre); £10,000 invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £1,500; employed 10 Europeans and 25 kanakas; wages paid to coloured classes of labour, £8 per head and rations; total wages paid to all classes in 1888, £700; considers Polynesian labour the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work, but they

will not do it; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; cultivates about 8 acres with horses for each black labourer employed; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, but Europeans will not stop long enough to try it; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, about £5 an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £40 an acre if done immediately after burning; cane has not suffered from disease since the rust of 1875; crop of 1888 affected by frost; does not know cost of machinery, part Colonial and part British manufacture; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £100; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, from 15s. to 25s. per week; thinks bananas can be grown in district; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—low prices, bad seasons, and the doctor not strict enough in passing the boys on their arrival; suggests irrigation as a remedy for the depression.

WILLIAM CHARLES WILSON, "Birbirim," has been sugar planting for seven years on the Mary River; total area of estate, 876 acres; 150 acres under cultivation, of which 40 acres are under cane, and the remainder under various crops, but will be planted with cane when the winter is over; about 20 acres crushed last season; his land is heavy alluvial soil, subject to flood; had a crop of 150 acres of cane destroyed in the February flood of 1887, which he estimated at the time would have returned 250 tons of sugar for that year; since the flood, has replanted the place about three times, but there have been such a succession of droughts that it never came away, and has been ploughed out again; capital invested in estate, about £10,000; returned a loss of about £800 in 1888; working expenses for 1888, about £1,400; employed on an average fifteen kanakas and six Europeans; wages paid to kanakas, 7s. per week; total wages paid to all classes in 1888, about £700; considers kanaka labour most decidedly the best for field work; has tried Europeans at field work on several occasions; has found them willing and able to work until they had earned a few shillings, when, in nearly every instance, they have thrown it up and said the work was only fit for niggers; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans, working horses and machinery, will certainly be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, but unfortunately cane cannot be cut and trashed by machinery, or drays loaded; considers those three things the largest part of work on sugar plantation; cultivates, as a rule, about 7 acres of cane for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate 15 acres of land where weeds are not very troublesome, but only up to trashing time when he would have to get help; neither blacks or whites suffer in health through being employed in field work; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, about £3 10s. an acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £5 an acre, but has paid as high as £8 and as low as £2 an acre; cane has not been affected by vermin or disease; cost of machinery, about £5,000, manufactured partly in Maryborough, and partly in Glasgow; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £100; thinks tobacco and rice could be grown in district, but coloured labour would be required to render their growth profitable; has tried tobacco in a small way with success; there is a lot of light work required in growing it, and the labour would have to be cheap; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—the fall in price of sugar and the uncertainty of cheap and reliable labour (European labour is not reliable); suggests, for the relief of the depression, an unlimited supply of cheap and reliable labour, or else a substitution of machinery (which is reliable) for cheap labour. If anyone could make machinery to cut cane, which he does not think possible, it would do away with a lot of labour at crushing time.

ARCHIBALD FLETCHER, "Myrtle Grove," has had seven years' experience on sugar plantations in Trinidad, and sixteen years in Queensland, in both mill and field; total area of estate, 75 acres; 75 acres under cultivation, viz., 30 acres under cane, 10 acres under maize, 29 acres cane land thrown out, and 6 acres paddock; no cane crushed last season, it being too severely frosted; capital invested, £2,800, which returned a loss in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £370; employed 2 Europeans and 7 kanakas; paid coloured labour 7s. per week and rations; total wages paid in 1881—to Europeans £143, and to kanakas £127; considers Polynesian labour the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work, but they will not stop at it for any time; his land is free from stumps, and therefore less kanakas are employed than formerly; one kanaka is required for every 5 acres; one European ploughman to every 30 acres; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, and Europeans do not stop at it long enough to try; cost of felling scrub, £2 10s. an acre; cost of burning-off, from 5s. to 10s. an acre; has never known new scrub to be stumped; cane has not suffered from vermin or disease; machinery bought second-hand, and cost £650, manufactured in Glasgow; thinks tobacco might be grown in district, but kanaka labour would be required to render its growth profitable; has grown no other tropical produce besides sugar, except cotton in Trinidad; not suitable for this climate, as it ripens during the wet months; considers causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—low price, high cost of labour, and bad seasons; suggests for the relief of the industry, repeal of Act stopping kanakas coming to the colony; suggests, for promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing, experimental farms in every district.

JAMES STEWART, "Rosemount," has been engaged in sugar cultivation forty-two years, and in maize growing for twenty-four years; total area of estate, about 900 acres; about 100 acres under cultivation, viz., 80 acres under sugar, 10 acres under maize, 2 acres mixed crops, and the rest fallow; crushed last season about 70 acres cane for a yield of about 35 tons of sugar; about £4,000 invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £600; employed 4 Europeans and 15 Polynesians; paid coloured labour £25 per annum; total wages paid to all classes in 1888, £475; prefers Polynesians for field work, because they stand the climate well and are reliable during the crush of work; has employed Europeans in field work and finds them unreliable; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, but not all; cultivates about 6 acres for each black labourer employed; one European if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., would cultivate about 6 acres; kanaka boys who come to the colony in health, improve in condition; field work does not affect the health of Europeans; cost per acre of felling and burning-off scrub, £4 to £4 10s.; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £3 to £5 per acre; cane has suffered from no disease, but winter crop of maize is invariably injured by blight; cost of machinery, £1,100, manufactured in Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs £40 or £50; wages paid to European labourers outside of agriculture in district, 6s. to 7s. per diem; maize, grapes, and

and bananas are grown in district, but not very successfully; Polynesian labour would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown maize and potatoes for home consumption; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—drought, continental competition, and the increased cost of recruiting Polynesian labour.

RICHARD FRASER CLARKE, "Mona," has been farming for twenty-five years on the Mary River; total area of estate, 800 acres; 80 acres under cultivation, viz., 70 acres under cane, 1 acre under sweet potatoes, and 9 acres under corn; crushed 60 acres last season, for a yield of 42 tons 8 cwt. of sugar; £6,500 invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £700; employed 3 Europeans and 14 kanakas; wages paid to kanakas £25 per annum; total wages paid to all classes in 1888, £410; prefers kanakas for field work as they are quiet and easily managed, strong and willing and sugar cultivation does not affect their health; has not employed Europeans in field work; they are, able to do it, but are unwilling to go into a cane field to work; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, but he could not do with less black labour than he employs at present for chipping, trashing, &c. when the cane gets too far advanced to work it with horses; cultivates 5 acres for each black labourer employed; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate 5 acres provided he cultivated it well, reaped it, &c.; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, provided they are in good health when they leave their islands; field work affects the health of Europeans; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, about £4 10s. per acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough would depend upon the age of the stumps and if the land was heavily timbered or not; cane is perfectly healthy and free from all disease; cost of machinery, £2,000, including tanks, pipes, &c. manufactured at Vulcan Foundry, Maryborough, Queensland; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £12 a year; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, about 30s. per week and rations; thinks bananas, grapes, corn, and pineapples can be grown in district, but cheap labour would be required to render their growth profitable; kanaka labour most suitable; has grown corn, but it did not pay; considers the principal causes of the depression in the sugar industry are the bounty system at home, the high cost of labour and the uncertain seasons.

PETER O'KELLY, "Iferney," has been engaged in sugar cultivation for twenty-two years, and in maize growing for twenty-five years; total area of estate, 630 acres; 100 acres mixed cultivation, viz., 84 acres under sugar cane, 8 acres under maize, 2 acres mixed crop, and 6 acres fallow; 84 acres of cane crushed last season, for a yield of 64 tons of sugar, or its equivalent in cane juice, which was sent to refinery at "Yengarie"; £7,500 actually invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888, owing to drought and frosts; working expenses for 1888, £537 6s.; employed 3 Europeans and 18 kanakas; paid kanakas £21 each per annum, which includes all expenses; total wages paid in 1888—to Europeans, £185, to kanakas, £378, total, £563; plantation hands get board and lodging as well; prefers the kanaka for field work; he is strong, tractable, reliable, able to stand the climate, and has no ambition above the hoe, or to compete with the white population in the towns; Europeans are unwilling to work among the cane; knowing their unwillingness he would not ask them to do it, but they are able enough in the latitude of Maryborough; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; but, making due allowance for that, could not do with fewer kanakas than he has at present; cultivates about 5 acres for each black labourer employed; thinks one European if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., could cultivate about 5 acres; but that means that he would also attend to the reaping, crushing, planting, and all other work connected with it; blacks employed in field work improve in health, except those who are diseased on arrival; field work does not affect the health of Europeans in the latitude of Maryborough, except, perhaps, among the cane when it is high and trashing has to be done; cost per acre of felling and burning-off scrub, £3 10s. to £4 an acre; cost of stumping it and making it fit for the plough would depend upon whether the stumps are decayed or not; perhaps £10 an acre would be a fair price; cane is free from disease; maize suffers from the blight; no remedy for it; what is called the winter or second crop is now entirely destroyed by the disease; maize crop of 1888 almost ruined, except that which was planted before the month of October; the cane crop of 1888 was not at all diseased; cost of machinery, £1,600; manufactured in Maryborough; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £45 a year—four breakages, principally; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, 6s. a day without keep; for 8 years paid £78 a year and board to a carpenter who erected buildings and fences; many fruits will grow in district as well as maize; but, owing to the uncertainty of the rainfall, maize is uncertain; kanakas would be required for maize growing, and a few kanakas are very handy about a farm; considers the chief causes of the depression in the sugar industry are, 1st, the bounty on European beet sugar; 2nd, the dearth of black labour owing to the legal restrictions put upon it about five years ago; 3rd, the drought; suggests for the relief of the depression, 1st, reciprocity treaty with the colony of Victoria, which could absorb all the annual surplus sugar; 2nd, a freer mode of recruiting islanders, who do not receive that sort of trade which they so much prize—viz., firearms and ammunition—but have to get money and other valuables instead, all of which means higher expense to the ship and the planter; 3rd, a system of irrigation; says in relation to the promotion of tropical agriculture, outside of sugar growing, that grape vines thrive well in district; maize, as a crop, is very uncertain, owing to the uncertainty of rain, which is indispensable to it, particularly at the "cobbing" time; of all the crops known to him sugar is by far the most certain; this is owing to the fact that it has no particular season for maturing; it will come to maturity in ten to twelve months from planting, under favourable circumstances, but may be allowed to stand over for two years with advantage.

WILLIAM YATES, "Tulano," has had nineteen years experience in Queensland, and New South Wales; total area of estate about 800 acres; 120 acres under cultivation; no cane crushed last season; juice always goes to Yengarie refinery; £4,000 invested in Estate which returned no interest in 1888; no work done in 1888, as the mill was burnt down; pays coloured classes of labour 7s. per week with rations; prefers kanakas for field work—they are reliable, strong, willing, tractable, do not clamour for the eight hour system, and have no ambition to compete with the white population in towns; has employed Europeans in field work; they are able enough to do the work (except perhaps, new chums) but they are quite unwilling and will not work if they can get other employment where the hours are shorter and the work

work itself less irksome and laborious; when the land is perfectly free from stumps Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour, but as the crushing, planting, and cultivation have to be done at the same time, a large staff of *kanakas* has to be kept throughout the year, so as to have them when wanted; cultivates 120 acres for each black labourer employed; in cane cultivation, a white man can do no more on an average than a *kanaka*; blacks employed in field labour do not suffer in health; they greatly improve in health and strength on the food and treatment they receive; field work does not affect the health of Europeans, except when the cane is tall and the weather hot, then it only affects new chums; cost per acre of felling and burning-off scrub, from £3 10s. to £4; cost per acre of stumping it, to make it fit for the plough, about £10 per acre, when the stumps are partially decayed; cane is free from disease, but maize is very liable to blight, and the winter crop is sometimes ruined; maize crop of 1888 was in some cases a failure, owing to the blight; machinery manufactured by J. Walker and Co.; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £40; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, 6s. 6d. per day, without board; thinks grape vines, bananas, and maize can be grown in district; oranges do not, as a rule, thrive well; to render their growth profitable, *kanakas* and white men would be required—the former are invaluable as helps on a farm; maize to be a certainty would require irrigation; causes which, in his opinion, have depressed the sugar industry are, 1st, the sudden fall in the price of sugar, caused by the bounty on beet sugar; 2nd, the unnecessary restrictions put upon the recruiting of islanders; 3rd, the disastrous droughts that have prevailed of late. Sugar has fallen in price 33 per cent. since 1884, and the fall has occurred through the market for Mauritius sugar having been choked by bounty-fed sugar; says that the depression could be relieved by an arrangement with the other colonies, particularly Victoria, to admit Queensland sugar on a preferential scale of duty, so that it should get a preference over foreign sugar—that could easily be done by a reciprocity treaty; says in relation to the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing, that of all the products grown or attempted to be grown in the district, sugar is by far the most profitable. This arises from the fact that it thrives well, is the hardiest for the variable climate, and when brought to market yields the largest margin of profit; the only drawback to its successful cultivation is the fear of the present labour supply being cut off, even remotely.

COOK DISTRICT.

ARCHIBALD JAMES TRAIL, "Villie" Plantation, property of the Weary Bay Sugar Company; Limited; has had eight years' experience in sugar cultivation in the district and on the Herbert River, total area of estate, 6,000 acres; 586 acres under cane; crushed 314 acres last season for a yield of 525 tons of sugar; molasses run away in drain; probably £100,000 invested in estate by the two companies who have owned it; returned no interest in 1888; rough estimate of working expenses for 1888, £8,000; employed 30 Europeans, 110 Chinese, and 132 Malays and Javaneses; paid coloured labour 2s. 1d. per diem; Malays fed by estate, and Chinese feed themselves; total wages paid in 1888 to Europeans, £1,793; to Malays, £2,400; to Chinese, £1,856; total, £6,049; prefers *kanaka* labour for field work; has employed Europeans in field work and found them an utter failure; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do much of the work now done by black labour; cultivates 44 acres for each black labourer employed; Chinese were only employed in cane cutting; does not think that 1 European using plough, horse, hoe, &c., could efficiently look after more than 10 to 12 acres by himself; blacks employed in field work do not suffer in health, but Europeans do; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £7 10s. per acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough £80 per acre; cane has been affected by cockatoos to a small extent; machinery manufactured by Mirrlees, Watson, and Co., and probably cost, £12,000; wages paid to European labourers, outside of agriculture in district, £3 10s. to £4 per week for miners; thinks ramee, cotton, tea, coffee, tobacco, citric fruits, and maize can be grown in district, but Coolie labour would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown no other tropical productions besides sugar cane; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—insufficiency of suitable coloured labour, and heavy rates of pay for all skilled labour; political animosity and the generally depressed tone of sugar business throughout the world; suggests for the relief of the depression—total abolition of tax on all machinery; Coolie labour or *kanakas* at greatly reduced cost; intercolonial freetrade for sugar; lesser wages to European labour; lesser freights; and last, but not least, lesser charges on the part of extortionate middlemen; says in relation to the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing—as the Government are sending a travelling dairy round among the farmers, why not extend the principle to the preparation of tobacco, tea, coffee, ramee, dried fruits, &c.; 90 per cent. of the agricultural resources of the colony are strangled by ignorance and overcharges.

LOGAN DISTRICT.

WILHELM NOE, "Noc's Farm," total area of estate, 47 acres; 20 acres under cultivation—viz., 10 acres under sugar cane, 8 acres under corn, 1 acre under sweet potatoes, half an acre under English potatoes, and half an acre under arrowroot, onions, beet, &c.; cut 10 acres of cane last season; 1½ tons sold; the remainder partly used for cattle and pigs; £400 invested in estate; farm worked by himself and family, and therefore has been at no expense for labour; considers white labour the most suitable for field work; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; moderate work will do no harm to Europeans, but hard work will injure their health; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £5 10s. per acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £12 per acre; considers the low price of sugar has caused the depression of the sugar industry; says that a higher price for the sugar would relieve the depression.

CHRISTIAN FREDERICK WILHELM KRÜGER, "Gramzow," has had twelve years' experience in the cultivation of sugar cane; total area of estate, 10 acres; none under sugar cane; 6 acres under maize; oats and potatoes half an acre each; employed 2 Europeans; paid 15s. a week and rations; thinks white labour the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work and thinks them willing and able to do it when horses cannot be used; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans working horses and machinery will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by Europeans; one
able

able bodied European would work 10 acres if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c.; field work does not affect the health of Europeans of sober habits; cost per acre of felling and burning-off scrub, £1 to £4 10s.; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough would vary according to the number and size of stumps—say £10 to £12 per acre for green stumps and £5 to £6 per acre for dry stumps; cane suffered slightly from effects of grub; maize suffered from rust in the autumn; does not know of any remedy; machinery manufactured in Scotland; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, 6s. per diem; thinks cotton, arrowroot and bananas can be grown in the district; labour of white men, women, and children would be required to render their growth profitable; has grown cotton successfully; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are production of beetroot sugar in Europe aided by Government bounties. Suggests for the relief of the depression—1st, abolition of bounties; 2nd, protection of the local article; 3rd, improved machinery; 4th, a steady market; 5th, good seasons; 6th, plenty of capital; 7th, reliable labour.

WILLIAM HENRY COULDERT, "Agoston," has had about twelve years' experience in the cultivation of sugar cane; total area of estate about 1,300 acres; about 5 acres under cultivation, viz., 3 acres under sweet potatoes, and 2 acres under lucerne; no cane has been crushed or grown since the season of 1885-6; £30,000 invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £1,455, expended in distilling molasses and in cattle breeding; employed 6 Europeans; total wages paid to Europeans in 1888, about £400; considers black, i.e., kanaka labour, the most suitable for field work; has had no experience of other coloured labour; has not employed Europeans in field work, except with horse implements; does not think Europeans would work with the hoe except under self-interested conditions; his land was stumped before being cultivated, and white labour employed with horses, when possible; much work has to be done by hand which is not adapted to Europeans; number of acres one European could work if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., would depend on his industry; health of blacks has not suffered specially through being employed in field work; field work such as Europeans are accustomed to perform does not affect their health; cost per acre of stumping scrub to make it fit for the plough, about £10 per acre; cost of machinery, £6,000, manufactured in the colony; thinks pine-apples, bananas, mangoes, and guavas can be grown in district, and European labour would be required to render their growth profitable; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are frost, and artificial restrictions as to labour and price; suggests for the relief of the depression—free trade among nations, or intercolonial free-trade, with a tax on foreign sugar; coloured labour in such districts and at such places as may be proclaimed by Government; heavy fines for its employment outside; the number for each place to be certified to as required for the *bona-fide* purposes of the industry by a district Government officer; restrictions, as in the case of Chinese, to prevent settlement on expiration of agreement; suggests for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing—the Department of Agriculture to communicate with local agricultural societies with a view of establishing experimental farms in suitable districts, and offer £2 for each £1 locally subscribed; particular attention to be given to the cultivation of fruits suitable for canning on the American principle, and the canning itself to be conducted on the latest and most approved method, should the cultivation prove successful; irrigation.

JAMES ADOLPHUS LOUIS, "Ebenezer" Plantation, has had eight years' experience in the cultivation of sugar cane; total area of estate, 791 acres; 90 acres under sugar cane, 50 acres under corn, 2 acres under lucerne, 1 acre under potatoes, balance grass paddock; 10 acres of cane all killed by frost last season; made 12 tons of sugar and 2,000 gallons of molasses; molasses used for distillation of rum; £8,000 invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £500; employed an average of 10 white men per day; employed no coloured labour; total wages paid in 1888, £300; considers South Sea Islanders the most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work but they will not work in the hot weather, and will not do the work unless very hard up for a job; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; one European, if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., on the land could cultivate 10 acres; field work affects the health of Europeans; the heat knocks them up; cost of felling and burning-off scrub, £4 per acre; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, about £3 an acre; has never noticed any disease in the cane, but corn has been affected by blight; corn suffered badly from drought in 1888; cost of machinery, £2,000; manufactured by Smith, Forrester, and Company Brisbane; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, about £30 a year; thinks arrowroot, cotton, tobacco, and all tropical fruits can be grown in district, but black labour would be required to render their growth profitable; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are, low price of sugar and cost of labour; suggests for the relief of the depression, cheap labour and protection.

MICHAEL BRUSE "Bruse's Farm," has had little or no experience in the cultivation of sugar; total area of estate, 70 acres, 2½ acres under cultivation—viz., ½ acre sugar cane; ¼ acre corn; ¼ acre English potatoes; ¼ acre sweet potatoes; ½ acre green stuff; ¼ acre calabages, beans, onions, &c.; £160 invested in estate, which returned 20 per cent. interest in 1888; employs no labour but his own family; considers white labour the most suitable for field work; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; moderate work will not affect the health of the Europeans; but over work will break down their health; cost per acre of felling and burning-off scrub, £5; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £10 per acre; crop of sweet potatoes partly eaten in 1888 by some rooing animal; has grown no other tropical produce besides sugar cane; considers the low price of sugar has caused the depression of the sugar industry; if a higher price could be obtained all farmers would grow cane in preference to other crops.

WILLIAM PIDD, "Norwell," has had twenty years' experience as a farmer, and ten years' experience in sugar cultivation; total area of estate, 672 acres; about 42 acres under cultivation—viz., 28 under cane and 12 under maize; 25 acres cane crushed last season for a yield of 9 tons sugar, and 10,000 gallons molasses; molasses still on hand; £1,675 invested in estate, which returned no interest in 1888; working expenses for 1888, £250; employed 5 Europeans besides the junior members of his family; employed no coloured labour; total wages paid in 1888, £250 and rations; considers a mixture of Europeans and kanakas would be most suitable for field work; has employed Europeans in field work; they are able to do it but often leave at the most busy time; when the land is perfectly free from

from stumps, Europeans, working horses and machinery, will be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; one European if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., on the land could work about 10 acres; field work does not affect the health of Europeans; his land is all forest; cost of stumping it to make it fit for the plough, £8 to £10 per acre; cane has not suffered from any particular disease, but has been affected by frost and floods combined; the whole crop of 1888 was very poor; thinks the flood rotted the roots of the cane; then the severe frost cut it all down; can generally reckon upon getting a ton of sugar or more per acre; cost of machinery £700, manufactured in Brisbane; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, from £10 to £50; wages paid to European labourers in district, outside of agriculture, 5s. 6d. to 6s. per day; thinks no other tropical production but sugar can be cultivated in district with success; has grown cotton, tobacco, arrowroot, and rice, but not successfully; has grown maize and sweet potatoes successfully; considers the causes which have depressed the sugar industry are—the extraordinary low price of sugar that has been ruling lately, and the compulsory waste at the small mills; says in relation to the relief of the depression that if the Government would send a practical sugar boiler and chemist to the small mills, at least, that would put the owners in a better way of working and so prevent a lot of waste; the small mills should also be allowed to distil their molasses and other refuse from the mill, such as skimmings, &c.; there is as much waste in these things as would go a long way towards paying for the extra labour required during crushing time; would also suggest that some of the duty be taken off colonial rum. Has no suggestions to make for the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing.

BRISBANE DISTRICT.

JOSEPH CHAPMAN DIXON, "Yagilla," Buderim Mountain, has had twelve years' experience in the cultivation of sugar cane; total area of estate, 865 acres; 107 acres under cane, and 20 acres under bananas; 67 acres crushed last season, for a yield of 90 tons sugar and about 3,500 gallons molasses; molasses mostly on hand; has sold 9 tons in a concentrated form in boxes for cattle feed at £5 per ton; £8,000 invested in estate, which just about paid expenses, including 8 per cent. on £6,000 overdraft; working expenses for 1888, £1,420; employed 25 Europeans and 26 kanakas—these were not on all the time; paid re-agreement kanakas £18 a year, and free kanakas 10s. to 15s. per week; total wages paid in 1888—to Europeans £445 4s. 9d., to kanakas £333—total £783 4s. 9d.; white men averaged 4s. 6d. per day not found, kanakas 8s. 6d. per week and found; thinks kanakas much the best for field work—they are easily managed and reliable and will work better when employer is away; employed white men only for two years at field work; did not find them very satisfactory; they are able to do the work when horses cannot be used, but not very willing; when the land is perfectly free from stumps, Europeans, working horses and machinery will, without doubt, be able to do a great deal of the work now done by black labour; white men are best with horses and can save a large amount of hand work, but for cutting and loading cane and chipping prefers blacks; cultivates 6½ acres for each black labourer employed; cannot say how many acres one European could work if able to use plough, horse, hoe, &c., on the land; has not tried them in that way; kanakas assist to keep the land clean in the rows; neither blacks nor whites suffer in health through being employed in field work; cost of falling and burning off scrub, £6 per acre; to stump it right off would be very expensive; after cropping, say in 3 years, most of the stumps are rotten; then £4 an acre would be sufficient; cane has been affected by rats but no disease; has tried no remedy; cost of machinery, £4,000, manufactured in Glasgow by Mirrlees, Tait, and Watson; cost of annual overhaul and repairs, £50; wages paid to Europeans labourers, outside of agriculture, in district, 6s. per day on roads, 7s. to 8s. on railway, timber getters, 30s. per week; thinks bananas, coffee, sweet potatoes, pineapples, and mangoes, can be grown in district; has 20 acres of bananas which pay well; they can only grow where there is no frost; has tried coffee to a small extent, but thinks it would require cheap labour to make it pay; considers the cause of the depression of the sugar industry is over production and consequently low prices; suggests for the relief of the depression, fair trade in sugar by doing away with the bounty on beet sugar, good machinery, good cultivation, and cheap labour; without the latter would certainly have had to give in long ago; says in relation to the promotion of tropical agriculture outside of sugar growing, that bananas are largely grown in district and successfully; the market is limited and prices low; 1½d. to 2d. a dozen is the price obtained, and then suffers great loss by shipment; oranges do well and are profitable; coffee growing would be successful if each small farmer went in for a patch of 1 acre; on a large scale kanakas or coolies would be wanted; the mango also could be grown for the South; something might be done with fibres if the right thing could be got hold of, such as China grasses and *musa textilis*; the latter is getting dearer every year.

WILLIAM SCHULZ, Toombul, is not growing or manufacturing sugar on account of it not paying when grown on a small scale; has sold machinery and given it up.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX No. 1.

LIST OF SPECIAL LEASES held in the CAIRNS LAND AGENT'S DISTRICT so far as they are recorded in the Books of the Land Office, Cairns.

No.	Dating from—	Name.	For what Purpose granted	Term.	Locality.	Area.	Annual Rent.
124	1880, June 12 ... 1882.	Queensland National Bank	Sawmill ...	21 years	On the bank of Trinity Inlet	A. R. P. 5 0 0	5 0 0
171	Sept. 1 ...	Swallow and Derham	Wharf and tram	7 do.	do. ...	7 0 0	5 0 0
178	Nov. 1 ... 1883.	Burns, Philp, & Co. ...	Wharf ...	5 do.	do. ...	230 feet	30 0 0
180	Jan. 1 ...	Robert Philp ...	do. ...	7 do.	do. ...	172 feet	30 0 0
191	March 1 ...	Burns, Philp, & Co. ...	do. ...	7 do.	Edithvale, Trinity Inlet ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
192	April 1 ... 1884.	R. A. Kingsford ...	do. ...	14 do.	On the bank of Trinity Inlet	200 feet	30 0 0
208	Jan. 1 ...	Charles Smith ...	do. ...	7 do.	Edithvale, Trinity Inlet ...	1 3 23	5 0 0
220	March 19 ...	Louis Severin ...	do. ...	7 do.	On the bank of Trinity Inlet	3 2 39	21 0 0
221	do. ...	Charles O'Luan ...	do. ...	7 do.	do. ...	2 2 0	16 0 0
226	Feb. 1 ... 1885.	William Walsh ...	do. ...	7 do.	do. ...	200 feet	84 0 0
250	July 20 ...	Alexander Grant ...	do. ...	10 do.	do. ...	3 2 21	6 0 0
251	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	10 do.	do. ...	5 1 11	5 0 0
259	May 29 ...	Ah Sam ...	Garden ...	Yearly, subject to 6 mos. notice without compensation	Gordon's Creek, Mulgrave rd.	4 2 0	4 10 0
260	do. ...	Ah Sow ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	4 3 0	4 15 0
261	do. ...	Ah Wey ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	4 3 0	4 15 0
262	do. ...	Ah Yow ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	4 3 0	4 15 0
263	do. ... 1884.	Ah Moy ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
264	Aug. 1 ...	Lum Fatt ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	4 0 0	4 0 0
265	do. ...	Moy Chew ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
266	Sept. 5 ...	Ah Sin ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
267	Nov. 14 ...	Lum Sin ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
270	do. ...	Ah Wong ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
272	Aug. 1 ... 1885.	Ah Kam ...	do. ...	do. ...	Barron River, near Meston's	5 0 0	5 0 0
275	May 8 ... 1884.	Ah Kit ...	do. ...	do. ...	On town boundary, Mulgrave road	5 0 0	5 0 0
276	Aug. 1 ... 1885.	Ah Chung ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
282	Nov. 1 ...	Martin & Sons ...	Sawmill ...	21 years	Barron River (Stratford)	5 0 0	25 0 0
301	April 1 ...	Clayton & Hill ...	Wharf ...	15 do.	Eastside Trinity Inlet	1 0 32	5 0 0
307	July 17 ...	Joseph Vidulich ...	Wharf ...	15 do.	do. ...	1 0 14	5 0 0
312	Aug. — ... 1885.	Barron River Rice Co.*	Wharf & mill site	21 do.	Barron River (Stratford)	3 0 0	15 0 0
311	June 1 ... 1886.	Cairns Boating Club ...	Boat-shed ...	10 do.	Trinity Bay, West Shore	100 feet	1 0 0
333	Jan. 1 ...	Ah Choy ...	Garden ...	Yearly, subject to 6 mos. notice without compensation	On town boundary (western)	5 0 0	5 0 0
334	do. ...	Ah Ting ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	4 2 0	4 10 0
335	do. ...	Tung Yow ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
336	do. ...	Ah Chong ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
337	do. ...	Ah Kim ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
338	July 1 ... 1887.	Wong Mow Yin ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
329	Jan. 1 ...	Barron River Rice Co.	Not stated	21 years	Stratford	3 2 24	20 0 0
347	June 1 ...	Murray & Carson ...	Sawmill ...	21 do.	Chinanman's (or Alligator) Creek	1 0 0	26 0 0
351	July 1 ...	Smith Bros. ...	Wharf ...	21 do.	Inlet ...	300 feet	5 0 0
271	...	John Robb ...	Hospital ...	Until termination of contract for railway	Barron River, near Meston's	2 3 24	2 18 0
360	Oct. 4 ... 1887.	Daniel Patience ...	Wharf ...	15 years	East side Inlet ...	1 1 0	5 0 0
352	July 1 ...	Charley Ah Chun ...	Garden ...	Yearly, subject to 6 mos. notice without compensation	Bibochra, Upper Barrow	5 0 0	5 0 0
353	do. ...	Ah Lye ...	do. ...	do. ...	do. ...	5 0 0	5 0 0
354	July 25 ... 1885.	Ah Chew ...	do. ...	do. ...	Lilybank, Warren River	10 0 0	10 0 0
377	Dec. 18 ...	Ah Ching (at auction)	Wharf ...	15 years	Inlet ...	0 0 36	30 0 0

* Not in Register. Particulars from correspondence and leases.

17th January, 1889.

R. T. HARTLEY, Acting Land Agent.

APPENDIX No. 2.

RETURN of AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE Exported and Removed Coastwise from the Port of CAIENS.

		Sugar, raw.		Molasses.		Fruit, green.		Maize.		Cotton, raw.		Potatoes.		Potatoes, sweet.		Ginger, green.		Pumpkins.		Tobacco.		Rice.	
		T. C.	£	T. C.	£	PROG.	£	BUSHELS.	£	LB.	£	T.	£	T. C.	£	PKGS.	£	T.	£	LB.	£	LB.	£
1882	Exported	110	8	3,000						5,300	140	2	24										
	Removed coastwise	16	0	414																			
		126	8	3,474																			
1883	Exported	1,094	15	31,607		207	15	1,301												220	15		
	Removed coastwise	34	2	941																			
		1,128	17	32,548		207	15	1,301															
1884	Exported	1,053	0	21,698		575	0	1,725															
	Removed coastwise	422	0	9,554				198	198	520	144												
		1,485	0	31,652		575	0	1,725															
1885	Exported	1,516	18	31,066		496	0	2,681										2	0	11	2,500	83	
	Removed coastwise	368	0	8,403		0	4	4	1,486	1,896													
		1,884	18	39,469		496	4	2,685															
1886	Exported	1,292	14	29,151		199	13	948						0	3	1							
	Removed coastwise	282	10	6,203		19	0	57		1,965	1,909	1	5	7	0	23		3	0	9	1,120	50	4,360
		1,575	4	35,354		218	13	1,005						7	3	29							
								5,475															
1887	Exported	741	6	16,653		154	6	447									14	14					
	Removed coastwise	570	2	13,024				11,535	1,815	9,576	2,297						20	20		2	10	10	3,024
		1,311	8	29,677		154	6	447									34	34					133
								76,965	9,013														1,120
1888	Exported	795	3	18,777		138	12	348						12	6	30		24	18		0	3	1
	Removed coastwise	737	17	14,854				26,397	4,178	10,808	2,192			23	0	76		25	25		10	0	32
		1,533	0	33,631		138	12	348						35	6	106		49	43		10	3	32

TOTAL EXPORTS, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE

	£
1882	3,638
1883	33,864
1884	33,720
1885	47,404
1886	44,796
1887	41,626
1888	47,969

R. T. HARTLEY, (Sub-Collector of Customs.

APPENDIX No. 3.

RETURN OF SUGAR PRODUCED AND LAND UNDER SUGAR-CANE in the District of CAIRNS.

	Quantity of Cane crushed.	Tons of Sugar produced therefrom.	Gallons of Molasses produced therefrom.
Year ended 31st March, 1883...	Acres. 150	180	26,000
" " 1884...	180	1750	75,000
" " 1885...	187	1,918	78,000
" " 1886...	1,228	2,214	106,200
" " 1887...	...	...	...
" " 1888...	1,150	2,050	30,000

R. T. HARTLEY.

Sub-Collector Customs, Cairns.

APPENDIX No. 4.

ACTUAL PRODUCE OF THE PORT DOUGLAS DISTRICT—EXPORT RETURN for the Year ended 31st December, 1888.

Articles.	Produce of the Colony. Quantities.	Value.
Bananas ...	35,124 bunches	£ 4,135
Bananas, dried...	41 cases	51
Sugar ...	366 19 tons	7,334
Pineapples ...	253 cases	197
Passion-fruit ...	27 cases	17

A. E. PYWELL,

Acting Sub-Collector.

11th January, 1889.

APPENDIX No. 5.

STATEMENT BY MR. A. J. DRAPER, CAIRNS.

MR. A. J. DRAPER having to leave Cairns before his evidence could be taken, handed the following statement to the Commission:—

The Secretary, Sugar Commission, Cairns.

SIR,—I have the honour to tender herewith a few remarks relative to tropical agriculture in Cairns, and in doing so take this opportunity of regretting my unavoidable absence during your stay in our midst.

As a preface to my remarks, I may state that for the past few years I have taken great interest in agricultural produce generally, and am the proprietor of a nursery and orangery.

From carefully watching the advance made by my fruit trees, I have no hesitation whatever in stating that seedlings are in every way preferable to grafted trees. Whether it is due to climatic influence or no, I cannot say, but it is an undoubted fact that seedlings bear in this district inside of five years. On the other hand, many grafted trees, although cared for in every way, have been planted seven and eight years and are still fruitless. I find also grafted trees are very subject to pests of every description, and, unless carefully watched, do no good on that account, while seedlings are healthier and less liable to attack.

Mangoes grow luxuriantly, but the great bar to production at a profit is a moth that pierces the fruit just as it ripens and leaves a deposit of maggots. I feel sure the Department of Agriculture could advise selectors how to rid themselves of this evil.

Bananas are particularly in my line, and they are without doubt, although few admit it, the second backbone of Cairns at the present day. My exports during the past two years have averaged about 2,000 bunches weekly, and during that period I have had ample opportunity of gaining valuable experience. The popular cry that the fruit is sent away too green has something in its favour, but I unhesitatingly say that the exports from North Queensland of this product would be quadrupled immediately if more care was taken in the shipping and handling. It is on account of the great knocking about the fruit receives that it has to be shipped so green. It may be asked, how can the assistance of Government be brought to bear upon this? In the first place encourage an opposition shipping company; in the second, push on our harbour works, so as to allow vessels at all tides to come to the wharf, and thereby save handling; and finally, in granting a contract to carry the mails, stipulate that the ships have movable fixtures to carry the fruit upon.

Fourpence per bunch is paid for lighterage and wharfage at present, and considering the average price per bunch is about 1s. 3d., it is clear 4d. is a heavy tax.

Although going a trifle beyond the question, I would suggest, with deference, that a further step be taken, and that by our Federal Council—viz., to make the penalties for defrauding consigners, by issuing false account sales or in any way tampering with same, a serious offence. It is well known that consigners are robbed of large sums by dishonest agents, and when such a distance intervenes between the market and port of shipment as in our case, fear of imprisonment might assist towards correct returns.

Bananas yield a most profitable crop, and only ask a clean soil. I find forest country less suitable than scrub, but the latter is all that can be desired.

Information as to how bananas are shipped in other parts of the globe, how cultivated, and the best soils to grow would be acceptable to settlers, as up to now nothing but chipping with the hoe has been practised, and this at a great cost.

Pineapples are most prolific, and with bananas offer every inducement to cultivators.

Sugar unfortunately also fell to my lot, and while leaving this matter to more able men than I to dilate upon, I may add that my partners and I bought the right to crush some 800 acres of cane from a plantation. Everything was in going order and had worked about two weeks when we took charge. By way of experiment we decided to utilise white labour in the field, and the result was most disastrous. We put on gang after gang of white men to cut the cane, and they all gave it up, and eventually we had to employ Chinamen at 28s. per week, and the end was we lost £1,400 in about two months, although our manager was an able man of great experience.

I cannot

I cannot too strongly urge the immediate formation of the State nursery. It would be a boon, not alone to Cairns, but the whole of Tropical Queensland. It is greatly to be regretted such delay is taking place in the matter, as the wet season will be gone soon, and a year lost.

In conclusion I strongly bring before your notice the great trade possible in the exportation of fruit, particularly bananas and pines, from our midst, and while feeling that my ideas of fostering the trade may be considered far-fetched I think them reasonable.

The duty into Melbourne of 7d. per bunch is a great drawback to the trade, and any reciprocity treaty feasible which could remove or reduce it would be advantageous to the colony.

I have, &c.,
A. J. DRAPEL.

APPENDIX No. 6.

RATES OF MORTALITY amongst POLYNESIANS in GERALDTON HOSPITAL.

1886. From May 26.					
Number treated	...	189	Died	...	23
Death rate per cent., 12.169.					
1887. January to December (inclusive).					
Number treated	...	435	Died	...	24
Death rate per cent., 5.747.					
1888. January to December (inclusive).					
Number treated	...	459	Died	...	20
Death rate per cent., 4.357.					

23rd January, 1889.

S. S. BOWLES,
Acting Inspector Pacific Islanders.

APPENDIX No. 7.

SCHEDULE OF EMPLOYERS OF PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS in the District of GERALDTON, as at 1st January, 1889.

No.	Employer's Name.	Estate.	Locality.	Distance from Office.	Under Agreement.	Exemption Ticket Holders.	Not under Agreement.
				Miles.			
1	Colonial S. R. Co.	Goondi	Johnstone River, North Branch...	23	461	12	23
2	Cutten Bros.	Electon	Clump Point	25	5	...	...
3	J. P. Fitzgerald	Redcliffe	Johnstone River	4	...	...	6
4	W. Hyne & Co.	Woodlands	Clump Point	28	8	...	6
5	J. C. Hubinger	Muaogo Creek	Cardwell	55	1	...	...
6	Johnstone River S. Co.	Junissal	Johnstone River, North Branch...	7	8	...	10
7	Geo. Kerr	Cessford	Alligator Creek, North Branch	61	...	...	1
8	Newlyan Sugar Co.	Newlyan	Johnstone River, South Branch	44	...	...	25
9	Queensland Sugar Co.	Lanishoven	Johnstone River, South Branch	34	37	...	10
Total					520	12	81
					613		

SHOLTO STILLINGFLEET BOWLES,
Acting Inspector Pacific Islanders.

APPENDIX No. 8.

GERALDTON—JOHNSTONE RIVER.

LIST OF CONVICTIONS—Supplying Islanders with Liquor.

No.	Date.	Taken by.	Name.	Charge.	Fine.
1	8-2-86	R. Levinge	Mrs. M. S. McDonald	Supplying	£5, and costs 4s. 6d.
2	6-4-86	W. Langdon	Mrs. M. S. McDonald	Supplying	£10, and costs 4s. 6d.
3	7-4-86	Police	Mrs. M. S. McDonald	Selling	£20, and costs 2s. 6d.
4	21-4-86	Assistant Inspector, P.I.	Mrs. M. S. McDonald	Supplying	£10, and costs 4s. 6d.
5	13-7-86	Police	Mrs. M. S. McDonald	Selling	£50 and six months; verdict quashed.
6	14-7-86	Police	William Crisp	Selling	£20.
7	29-9-86	Excise	Ah Poo	Selling	£20, and costs 10s. 6d.
8	30-11-86	W. Canny	Mrs. M. S. McDonald	Supplying	£5, and costs 4s. 6d.
9	10-11-86	W. Canny	Mrs. M. S. McDonald	Supplying	£5, and costs 4s. 6d.
10	19-11-86	Police	T. Hillman	Supplying	£3, and costs 4s. 6d.
11	24-11-86	C. E. Adams	"Janaos" (Cingalee)	Supplying	£1, and costs 4s. 6d.
12	13-1-87	Excise	Mrs. M. S. McDonald	Selling	£2.
13	24-1-87	Police	Peter (Cingalee)	Selling	£30, sold to a white man.
14	30-6-87	Police	Adgia (Borneo)	Supplying	£1, or 14 days.
15	10-1-88	Police	Dusup (Batavia)	Supplying	£5,* or 3 months.
16	15-2-88	Police	Said (Abyssinia)	Supplying	£3,* or 3 months.
17	24-2-88	Police	James Robertson	Supplying	£3.
18	17-7-88	Police	James Prater, alias "Janaos"	Supplying	£5,* or 3 months.

* Fine not paid.
CASES DISMISSED.

1	19-2-87	C. E. Adams	John Brownlie	Supplying	...
2	1-3-88	Excise	Mrs. M. S. McDonald	Selling	...
3	27-2-88	Excise	James Car ill	Selling	...

Geraldton, 23rd January, 1889.

S. S. BOWLES,
Acting Inspector Pacific Islanders.

APPENDIX No. 9.

CLAIMS ADVANCED by RELATIVES of DECEASED POLINESIANS in the GERALDTON DISTRICT to the HEAD OFFICE, and acknowledged by Payment.

Name of Claimant.	Name of Deceased.	Relationship.	Amount Claimed.	When Paid.
Lee-Ananui, at Goendi	Tagalooa	Brother	£ s. d. 7 11 0	25-11-86
Meleger, at Innishowen	Mimalemal	Brother	1 10 0	12-5-87
Arakell, at Innishowen	Troar	Brother	2 0 0	10-5-87
Lilly, at Mourilani	Dowell	Wife	10 10 0	9-5-87
Taumomoe, at Gwendit	Boolah	Brother	2 0 0	

* Not paid, on account of Tamressode having died in hospital, 24th November, 1888. Re-transmitted to Brisbane.

S. S. BOWLES,
Acting Inspector Pacific Islanders, Geraldton.

23rd January, 1889.

APPENDIX No. 10.

LIST OF CASES of CONVICTIONS and DISMISSALS in the POLICE COURT of INGHAM for SELLING or SUPPLYING LIQUOR to PACIFIC ISLANDERS, from 1st January, 1886, to 31st January, 1889.

No.	Date.	Informer.	Offender.	Charge.	To whom Sold or Supplied.	Fine.
	1886.					£ s. d.
1	August 31	J. W. Knox	F. Morris	Supplying	S.S.I. Santo	2 0 0
2	September 7	W. Grant	Ah Sing	"	" Marie	5 0 0
3	September 27	Police	W. Scott	"	" Joe Tanna	3 0 0
4	October 4	Inspector Pacific Islanders	Mahomet Hassan	"	" Verrateer	4 0 0
5	October 12	Revenue Police	Ah Sum	"	Pacific Islander	5 0 0
6	October 18	"	Un Wing Ching	"	"	5 0 0
7	December 27	Local Police	Ah Tin	Selling	S.S.I. Spider	15 0 0
8	"	"	"	"	" Taringalow	15 0 0
9	"	"	"	Supplying	" Spider	5 0 0
10	"	"	"	"	" Taringalow	5 0 0
						64 0 0

CASES DISMISSED.

1	July 21	Local Police	Mahomet Bryan	Supplying	Pacific Islander	
2	December 6	W. M. Boyd	Charley Tanna	"	"	
3	April 3	Inspector Pacific Islanders	Maharao	"	"	

Ingham, 31st January, 1889.

CHAS. A. FORSTER, Inspector Pacific Islanders.

APPENDIX No. 11.

SCHEDULE of EMPLOYERS of PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS in the DISTRICT of INGHAM as at 1st January, 1889.

No.	Employer's Name.	Estate.	Locality.	Distance from Office.	Under Agreement.	Exemption Ticket Holders.	Not under Agreement.
				Miles.			
1	Andersen, A.	Riverview	Halifax	13	11	5	7
2	Alm, John	Groseth	ditto	13	3	0	0
3	Cowley, A. S.	Gairloch	Ingham	4	2	...	3
4	Cochrane, P. J.	St. Fillans	Halifax	14	1	0	0
5	Carr, A. W.	Oakleigh	Halifax	10	2	0	1
6	Colonial Sugar Refining Company	Victoria Mill and Gairloch	Ingham	34	366	1	35
7	Paulsfull, H. J.	Hornsey	Halifax	13 1/2	2	0	0
8	Lely, John	Mona Farm	ditto	14	1	1	1
9	Neame, F. and A.	Macknade	ditto	10	76	0	5
10	Regazzoli, E.	Halifax (selection)	ditto	13	1	0	...
11	Rosendahl, N.	Gumley	ditto	11	2	0	0
12	Wood Bros. and Boyd	Ripple Creek	Ingham	8	95	4	18
13	Whittingham Bros.	Hamleigis	ditto	24	51	0	14
14	Waller Bros.	Cordelia Vale	Halifax	9	5	...	6
15	Cassidy, J.	Moengoola	Coast	13	...	2	0
16	Fisher, —	Francis Creek (selection)	Ingham	10	...	5	0
				Total	618	18	90
						726	

Ingham, 31st January, 1889.

CHAS. A. FORSTER, Inspector of Pacific Islanders.

APPENDIX No. 12.

SCHEDULE of NUMBER of ISLANDERS employed in the INGHAM DISTRICT, showing NUMBER EMPLOYED and DEATH RATE, 1886-1887-1888.

No.	Name.	Estate.	1886.			1887.			1888.		
			Number of Islanders Employed.	Died.	Rate per Cent.	Number of Islanders Employed.	Died.	Rate per Cent.	Number of Islanders Employed.	Died.	Rate per Cent.
1	A. Andersen	River View	9	...	...	14	...	...	23	...	...
2	Alm, J.	Groseth	...	...	...	4	...	...	5	...	...
3	Buchanan, A.	Lilly Bank	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...
4	Carr, A. W.	Osklingh	4	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...
5	Gairloch Sugar Co.	Gairloch	95	6	6.3	...	...	...	...	...	...
6	Hamleigh Sugar Co.	Hamleigh	58	6	10.3	...	...	...	...	...	...
7	Whittingham Bros.	...	...	...	...	40	2	5.0	65	2	3.0
8	Macknade Sugar Co.	Macknade	113	8	7.1	...	...	...	...	...	...
9	F. & A. Neame	...	...	...	...	82	5	6.1	81	8	9.9
10	Rosendahl, N.	Gumley	39	...	...	3	...	...	2	...	...
11	Traill & Co.	Trebonne	9	3	3.3	...	...	...	...	...	...
12	Victoria Colonial Sugar Co.	Victoria Mill	294	10	3.4	304	3	1.0	402	16	4.0
13	Won Bros. & Boyd	Ripple Creek	125	4	3.2	108	14	12.9	117	6	5.2
14	Waller Bros.	Cordelia Vale	14	...	...	14	3	21.6	11	...	...
15	Kapazoli, P.	Selection, Halifax	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
16	Robinson, H.	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...
17	Radford & Co.	Springfield	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
18	Norman, M.	Halifax	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
19	Lely, J.	Mona Farm	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...
20	Herron, F.	Drumcres	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
21	Cassidy, —	Coast	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
22	Fisher, —	Francis Creek	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
23	Cowley, A. S.	Gairloch Homestead	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	...
24	Cochrane, P. J.	St. Fillans	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
25	Faithfull, H. J.	Selection, Halifax	...	...	...	...	...	...	12	...	...
			758	37	5.0	598	27	4.5	726	33	4.5

Ingham, 31st January, 1889.

CHAS. A. FORSTER, Inspector Pacific Islanders.

APPENDIX No. 13.

SUMMARY of the ANNUAL RETURNS, showing the working of the LABOR BUREAU in connection with the TOWNVILLE IMMIGRATION OFFICE.

From 8th March, 1887 (date on which Registers were opened) until 31st December, 1887.	Artisans.	Mechanics.	Agricultural.	Plantation.	Station.	Other Labour.	Married Couples.	Female Domestic.
Demand	17	7	135	49	5	309	47	497
Supply	34	63	81	33	12	387	48	150
Excess of Demand	...	...	54	16	...	...	...	337
Excess of Supply	17	56	...	...	7	78	1	...
Engagements made	...	...	467	...	...	...	...	...
Agreements	...	...	78	...	...	...	...	...

SUMMARY for the Year ending 31st December, 1888.

From 1st January till 31st December, 1888.	Artisan.	Mechanics.	Agricultural.	Plantation.	Station.	Other Labour.	Married Couples.	Female Domestic.
Demand	18	27	150	108	8	292	53	592
Supply	44	50	135	37	22	312	59	243
Excess of Demand	...	...	15	71	...	...	...	349
Excess of Supply	26	23	...	...	14	20	6	...
Engagements made	...	...	767	...	...	...	...	...
Agreements	...	...	182	...	...	...	...	...

JOHN A. WALLACE, Assistant Immigration Agent.

The following are the rates of wages ruling in this district :—
 Mechanics, 10s. to 11s. per diem; lumpers, 1s. 3d. to 2s. per hour; navvies, 7s. to 9s. per diem; farm labourers, £40 to £45 per annum; ploughmen, 18s. to 20s. per week; old hands, 20s. to 25s. per week; general labourers, 13s. to 18s. per week; mill hands, 15s. to 20s. per week; cooks on plantations, generally 25s. to 30s. per week.
 General servants, 10s. to 15s. per week; cooks and laundresses, 15s. to 20s.; laundresses (hotels), 20s. to 25s. per week; housemaids, 8s. to 12s.; hotels, 15s.

JOHN A. WALLACE, Assistant Immigration Agent.

APPENDIX No. 14.

RETURN Showing the DEATH RATE amongst the PACIFIC ISLANDERS employed in the TOWNVILLE DISTRICT during the THREE YEARS as under.

Name of Employers.	Plantation.	1886.			1887.			1888.		
		Number of Islanders Employed.	Number Deaths.	Rate per Cent.	Number of Islanders Employed.	Number Deaths.	Rate per Cent.	Number of Islanders Employed.	Number Deaths.	Rate per Cent.
Abeare, Joseph	Maita Vale	9	...	...	7	...	...	3	2	67
Cran, J. W.	Loch Marie	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Drysdale Bros. and Co.	Pioneer	203	16	8	137	22	16	230	41	18
Johnson, Pre	Klersia	...	...	...	2	...	50	1	...	...
Macmillan, A. C.	Airdmillan	7	2	28	7	...	...	5	1	20
Mackenzie, Jas.	Seaforth	159	6	3.7	95	4	4	149	10	6.7
Oliver, Wm.	Trent Estate	5	...	...	2	...	...	1	...	...
Young Bros. and Co.	Kalamia	170	6	3.5	86	2	2.3	139	...	...
Total		553	30	5.4	357	29	8	529	64	10

JOHN A. WALLACE, Inspector of Pacific Islanders.

APPENDIX No. 15.

SCHEDULE OF EMPLOYERS OF PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS in the District of TOWNSVILLE, as at 1st January, 1889.

No.	Employers' Names.	Estate.	Locality.	Distance from Office.	NUMBER OF ISLANDERS.		
					Agreement.	Exempt.	Not Work- ing &c.
1	Abgarne, Josh.	Maida Vale	Lower Burdekin	Miles.			
2	Cran, J. W.	Lech Marie	Townsville	73	3	1	There are from 20 to 30 Islanders walking about.
3	Drysdale Bros. & Co.	Pioneer	Lower Burdekin	4	1	2	
4	Johnson, Fred.	Ellerslie	Townsville	68	217	1	
5	Macmillan, A. C.	Arndmillan	Lower Burdekin	3	5	1	
6	Mackenzie, Jas.	Seaforth	"	85	167	3	
7	Oliver, Wm.	Trent Estate	"	78	1	1	
8	Young Bros. & Co.	Kalamia	"	73	148	2	
			Total		543	10	

JOHN A. WALLACE, Inspector Pacific Islanders

APPENDIX No. 16. (A.)

PRODUCE IMPORTED into TOWNSVILLE during Year 1888.

	Tons	cwt.	qr.
Hay	569	15	1
Chaff	1,152	18	1
Potatoes	1,337	6	2
Onions	320	17	0
Maize	91,926½	bushels	
Oats	18,911	"	
Wheat	4,341½	"	
Butter	130,346	hogsheads	
Cheese	118,324	"	
Green fruit	21,584	packages.	

PRODUCE IMPORTED into TOWNSVILLE for the Month of January, 1889.

	Tons	cwt.	qr.
Hay and chaff	253	19	0
Potatoes	136	13	0
Onions	22	16	2
Maize and oats	16,115	bushels	
Wheat	136	"	
Butter	12,893	hogsheads	
Cheese	6,626	"	
Green fruit	2,047	packages.	

APPENDIX No. 16 (B.)

PRODUCE IMPORTED into MACKAY for the Year 1888.

	Tons	cwt.	qr.
Hay	32	11	0
Chaff	119	5	3
Potatoes	492	18	2
Onions	51	18	3
Maize	21,305	bushels	
Oats	12,401½	"	
Wheat	50	"	
Butter	6,209	lb.	
Cheese	15,684	"	
Fruit (green)	2,088	packages.	

PRODUCE IMPORTED into MACKAY for the Month of January, 1889.

	Tons	cwt.	qr.
Hay and chaff	16	0	0
Potatoes	12	11	1
Onions	3	3	0
Maize and oats	987	bushels	
Wheat	Nil		
Butter	177	lb.	
Cheese	1,135	"	
Fruit (green)	60	packages.	

APPENDIX No. 17.

SUMMARY of the ANNUAL RETURNS showing the working of the LABOUR BUREAU in connection with the MACKAY IMMIGRATION OFFICE.

From 5th March, 1887 (date on which Registers were opened) until 31st December, 1887.		Artisans.	Mechanics.	Agricultural.	Plantation.	Station.	Other Labour.	Married Couples.	Female Domestic.
Demand	...	2	8	53	198	2	5	12	34
Supply	...	5	5	39	128	2	11	6	41
Excess of Demand	...		3	13	70	...	...	6	...
Excess of Supply	...	1	...	...	...	...	6	...	7
Engagements made	...	...	...	...	132	...	...	...	...
Agreements	...	...	...	...	76	...	...	...	...

SUMMARY for the Year ending 31st December, 1888.

From 1st January to 31st December, 1888.							Artizans.	Mechanics.	Agricultural.	Thamtion.	Station.	Other Labour.	Married Couples.	Female Domestic.
Demand	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	43	106	5	24	13	34
Supply	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	133	42	5	22	15	44
Excess of Demand	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	90	64	...	2	...	...
Excess of Supply	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	144	...	...	...	2	10
Engagements made	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	78	...	...	...	...	...
Agreements made	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

F. C. HORN BROOK,
Assistant Immigration Agent, Mackay.

The following are the rates of wages ruling in this district:—Mechanics, 10s. per day; navvies, 7s. to 8s. per day; farm labourers, 12s. per week; ploughmen, 15s. to 18s. per week; general labourers, 13s. to 15s. per week; mill hands, 15s. per week; cooks and bakers, £2 to £2 10s. per week; general servants, 10s. to 12s. per week; hotel servants, 12s. to 15s. per week; house-maids, 8s. to 10s. per week; married couples, £10 to £50 per annum.

F. C. HORN BROOK,
Assistant Immigration Agent, Mackay.

APPENDIX No. 18.

SCHEDULE of EMPLOYERS of PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS in the District of MACKAY, as at 1st January, 1889.

No.	Name of Employer.	Estate.	Locality.	Distance from Office.	NUMBER OF ISLANDERS.		
					Agreement.	Exempt.	Not Working.
1	Armitage, J.	Eimeo	North Coast	12	1	...	...
2	Atherton, E.	Cliftonville	...	20	1	...	...
3	Bank of Australasia	Ashburton	North Side	9	215	...	...
4	Baker, T.	Barrie	Eton	20	35	...	...
5	Bolton, F. W.	Farleigh	...	10	136	2	...
6	Christensen, H.	Homefield	...	13	1	...	...
7	Colonial Sugar Refining Company	Homebush	...	13	121	...	...
8	Cook, J.	Balnagowan	...	12	1	...	...
9	Dalrymple, D. H.	Newbury	...	15	1	...	...
10	Denman, E.	Etourie	...	10	4	...	...
11	Dupey, C.	St. Marie	North Side	13	4	...	...
12	Evans, C. W.	Erridge	...	3	1	...	...
13	Geisler, J.	South Boundary	...	2	1	...	...
14	Grosskreutz, E.	Greenfield	near Marion Mill	17	1	...	...
15	Gladstone, D.	Woodlands	...	12	1	...	...
16	Henderson, A.	Beaconsfield	...	6	31	...	...
17	Hess, J. G.	Near Homebush	...	15	2	...	...
18	Hyne and Co.	Meadowlands	...	3	68	...	...
19	Inverarity and McInnes	Ellalong	...	18	4	...	...
20	Jane, H. J.	Glendervagh	...	7	7	...	...
21	Jones and Brackenbury	Near Habana	...	14	3	...	...
22	Lacy, Dyson	St. Helens	...	50	1	...	...
23	Langford, B.	Mayfield	near Marion Mill	16	1	...	...
24	Long, E. M.	Habana	...	14	190	...	...
25	Mackay Sugar Company	Victoria Mill	Eton	19	23	...	...
26	Mun, C. P.	Dingle Farm	Newbury	15	3	...	...
27	Markey, D.	Avondale	near Marion Mill	17	1	...	...
28	Matsen, O.	Springfield	...	15	2	...	...
29	Melbourne Mackay Sugar Company	Palms	...	10	64	1	...
30	Melbourne Mackay Sugar Company	Te Kowai	...	7	55	6	...
31	McBryde and Finlayson	Richmond Hill	...	8	42	...	...
32	McCready, H.	Palmyra	...	7	65	...	...
33	Neill, R.	Greenvale	...	14	2	...	...
34	Olson, F.	Racecourse	...	4	1	...	...
35	Paget Brothers	Nindaroo	...	10	137	...	...
36	Farrell, D.	Elleslie	near Broadsound	160	1	...	...
37	Petersen, C. V.	Jigger's Farm	...	7	2	...	...
38	Philip, J.	Sandeford	...	12	2	...	...
39	Rouald, R. B.	River Estate	...	4	198	...	...
40	Heid, E. V.	Mackay	...	...	1	...	...
41	Rynn, T.	Mayfield	...	5	3	...	...
42	Ryan, P.	Sea View	...	5	1	...	...
43	Steedman, W.	Pleystowe	...	11	26	3	...
44	Stevens, F. I.	Cottonvale	Homebush road	12	2	...	...
45	Voysey, Geo.	Rosevale	Bowen road	10	2	1	...
46	Watson, C. C.	Fernbrook	Walkerton	10	3	...	...
47	Webster, Chas.	Eulamere	...	14	3	...	...
48	Willock, C. J.	Rosemount	...	20	3	...	...
Total					1,473	13	430

F. C. HORN BROOK,
Inspector of Pacific Islanders, Mackay.

APPENDIX No. 19.

RETURN showing the DEATH RATE amongst the PACIFIC ISLANDERS Employed in the MAGRAT DISTRICT during the THREE YEARS, as under.

Name of Employer.	Plantation.	1886.			1887.			1888.		
		Number of Employed Islanders.	Number of Deaths.	Rate Per Cent.	Number of Employed Islanders.	Number of Deaths.	Rate Per Cent.	Number of Employed Islanders.	Number of Deaths.	Rate Per Cent.
Avery, J. S.	Ceningsby	20	2	6½	18	2	11	2	...	...
Armitage, J.	Rimeo	3	3	...	2	...	...	1	...	...
Atherton, E.	Cliftonville	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Adrian, W. S. O.	Mount Pleasant	44	...	...	37	...	...	...	...	...
Antony, J.	Etonvale	...	...	...	22	...	...	...	...	...
Bank of Australia	Ashburton and Pioneer	270	10	3½	212	17	7½	241	8	3½
Baker, T.	Burrie	66	5	7½	44	1	2½	47	...	...
Bailey, D.	Springvale	8	...	...	5	...	...	1	...	...
Bolton, F. W.	Farleigh and Fouldeu	187	23	12½	161	18	11	179	8	4½
Black, H. L.	The Grange	1	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Black, M. H.	Hamilton	7	1	...	5	1	...	3	...	...
Barley, J.	Green Park	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Barber, H. A.	Rosevale	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Bridgeman, R.	Metato	7	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...
Brown, R. S. P.	Walkerston	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Barry, J.	Nurwood	1	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...
Brand, G. A.	Etourie	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brown, K. C.	Victoria Mill	69	2	3	50	1	2	...	...	...
Baumgarten, H.	near Marion Mill	7	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Bryson and Stewart	Avondale	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bell, H.	Plane Creek	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Ball, A. T.	Varraville	2	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Christensen, H.	Homestead	110	8	7	120	2	1½	175	1	4½
Colonial Sugar Refining Co.	Eton	1	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Connor, D.	Landowene	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cook, J.	Bainagowan	3	...	...	10	...	...	5	...	...
Cestello, J. M.	Millicent	11	...	...	10	...	...	3	...	...
Christensen, J. W.	Coratweed	2	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...
Chevasse, G. W.	Forest Vale	1	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Cartney, J.	Faglemount	2	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Dalrymple, D. H.	Newbury	1	...	...	1	...	...	2	...	...
Danielson, Carl	Mitchell's Farm	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Dupey, C.	St. Marie	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...
Denman, E.	Etourie	1	...	...	6	...	...	12	...	...
Dennan and Costello	Richmond Trust	21	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...
Draper, A.	Eton	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Diehl, A.	Springfield	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...
Donaldson and Co.	Canawia	14	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Evans, C. W.	Kridge	1	...	...	6	...	...	3	...	...
Flood, M.	Virginia	5	...	...	4	1	25	...	...	...
Florence, A.	Inverary	5	...	...	5	...	...	5	...	...
Gellie, J.	South Boundary	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Gladstone, D.	Woodland Is.	2	...	...	2	...	...	4	...	...
Grosskreutz, E.	Greenfield	2	...	...	3	...	...	3	...	...
Gallangy, J.	La Florida	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Harney, J.	Plane Creek	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Henderson, A.	Beaconsfield	33	1	3	47	1	2	44	1	2½
Hendy, W.	Riverview Farm	3	...	...	6	...	...	2	...	...
Hess, J. G.	near Homebush	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hynes, W. and Co.	Meadowlands	108	4	3½	77	...	...	81	1	1½
Hunter, Chas.	Hunter's Hill	1	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...
Hamilton, A.	Hill End	2	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Hewitt and Co.	Pleystowe	90	1	1¼	49	1	2	...	...	...
Holt, W. H.	Glenpratt	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Inverarity and McInnes	Ellalong	6	...	...	4	...	...	4	...	...
Ivers, J. P.	Breaklands	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Ivers, B. D.	Dennybrook	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Ironside, Geo.	Aberdeen	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Inverarity, W.	Marion Mill	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Jane, H. J.	Glendarragh	9	...	...	7	...	...	12	...	...
Jones and Brackenbury	near Habana	7	...	...	1	...	...	3	...	...
Johansen, F. N.	Kelvin Grove	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Josing, H.	Woodlands	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Jobson, C.	Greenmount	87	1	1½	72	1	1½	...	...	...
Jack and Baker	Barrie	34	1	3	26	...	...	...	...	...
Keane, P.	Cedars	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Kaddatz, A.	Carryoff	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
King, G. M.	Branscombe	89	5	5½	68	1	1½	1	...	...
Kemp, C.	Kempsey	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Krieger, A.	Crapokri	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...
King, T.	Newbury	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Kennnis, A.	The Chase	8	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...
Lacy, Dymon	St. Helens	1	...	...	2	...	...	2	...	...
Lumford, E.	Mayfield	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Long, E. M.	Halana	279	9	3	200	17	8	139	6	4½
Lloyd, A. H.	Dunblaton	14	...	...	14	...	...	9	...	...
Landels, W.	Glenmoggan	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Mackay Sugar Company	Victoria Mill	19	...	...	66	1	...	23	...	...
Mackenzie, A. R.	Marion Mill	55	2	3½	25	...	...	33	...	...
Man, C. P.	Dingle Farm	1	...	...	3	...	...	4	...	...
Manuel, H.	Blackwater Creek	...	...	...	1	...	...	3	...	...
Markey, D.	Avondale	2	...	...	3	...	...	3	...	...
Matsen, O.	Springfield	...	...	...	6	...	...	4	...	...
McIourne and Mackay Sugar Company	Falms	211	12	5½	267	8	3	226	9	4
Jo.	Te Kowai	182	7	4	183	9	5	130	2	1½
Do.	Peri	36	1	3	8	...	...	...	...	...
Do.	Alexandra	77	6	...	52	4	7½	...	...	...
McBride and Finlayson	Richmond Mill	57	...	...	11	76	7	52	...	6
McCready, H.	Palmyra	91	3	3	87	7	8	92	3	7½
McClellan, B.	Rosehaugh	5	...	...	1	...	...	1	7	...
McCallum, J.	Woodford	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...

APPENDIX No. 19—continued.

RETURN showing DEATH RATE amongst PACIFIC ISLANDERS, MACKAY—continued.

Name of Employer.	Plantation.	1886.			1887.			1888.		
		Number of Employed Islanders.	Number of Deaths.	Rate per cent.	Number of Employed Islanders.	Number of Deaths.	Rate per cent.	Number of Employed Islanders.	Number of Deaths.	Rate per cent.
Mitchell, M.	Mitchell's Farm	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Muggerleton, J.	Plane Creek	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Mockridge, E.	The Dingle	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
McDunnott, P.	Brundolf	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
McSherry, H.	Mackay	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
McKinnon, C. F.	Pioneer	76	4	...	30	...	...	...	...	...
Neill, R.	Greenvale	4	...	...	2	...	...	4	...	...
Napier, W. B.	near Habana	4	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...
Northey, —	Kingsborough	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Olsen, F.	Oakenston	1	...	...	2	...	...	2	...	...
Oakenston Sugar Company	Oakenston	79	7	...	27	...	...	...	...	...
Paget Bros.	Mindaroo	175	4	2½	189	8	4½	213	...	5½
Parnell, D.	Ellerslie	...	...	...	2	...	...	3	12	...
Petersen, C. V.	Digger's Farm	...	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...
Petersen, Neil	Marselles	6	...	...	3	...	...	3	...	...
Philp, J.	Sandeford	12	...	...	10	...	10	11	...	...
Porter, J.	Eton	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ronald, R. E.	River Estate	311	16	5	244	21	9	255	15	6
Ross, W. S.	Culrose	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Reck, Carl	Louis Farm	...	...	...	2	...	...	2	...	...
Reid, E. V.	Mackay	...	...	...	2	...	...	2	...	...
Rice, L. K.	The Rocks	...	...	...	4	...	...	5	...	...
Ryan, T.	Mayfield	4	...	...	3	...	...	2	...	...
Ryan, P.	Seaview	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Realy, M.	Castle Connor	8	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Robinson, H. T. F.	Goodwin	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Steedman, W.	Pleystowe	57	2	2½	139	2	1½	122	...	...
Stevens, F. J.	Cottonvale	...	...	...	6	...	...	6	...	...
Synons, H.	near Habana	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sachse, W. H.	Boomerang	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Solway, T.	Solway's Farm	1	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Smith, J.	Scirlingvale	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...
Smith, A.	Allandale	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
Stephens, A. M.	Marion Mill	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Smith, Geo.	Marion Mill	7	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Toussaint, C. W.	Hazelwood	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Voysey, G.	Rosevale	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...
Walker, W.	Walker's Farm	3	...	...	2	...	...	1	...	...
Watson, E.	Fernbrook	2	...	...	4	...	...	3	...	...
Webster, Chas.	Eulamere	3	...	...	4	...	...	2	...	...
Willock, C. J.	Rosemount	9	...	...	6	...	...	12	...	...
Welman, P.	Luttrup	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Walker, A.	Newbury	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Willet, J.	Riverview Farm	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Weston Bros.	near Habana	5	...	...	7	...	...	...	...	...
Total	...	3,235	137	4½	2,846	132	4½	2,240	80	3½

F. C. HORN BROOK,

Inspector Pacific Islanders, Mackay.

APPENDIX No. 20.

SCHEDULE A.—RETURN of Complete SUGAR MILLS in the BUNDABERG DISTRICT.

—	Name of Owner or Occupant.	Name of Plantation.	Acres under Cane.	Value of Mills (when given).	Total Value of Mill and Plantation.	Value of Rolling Stock & Implements in Plantation.	Number of Whites Employed.	Whites' Wages and Rations per annum.	Number of Blacks Employed.	Blacks' Wages, Rations, and Passages.
				£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	M. F.	£ s. d.	M. F.	£ s. d.
1	A. H. & F. Young	Fairymead*	1,232	...	75,000 0 0	3,965 0 0	47 4	5,900 0 0	267 0	5,860 0 0
2	Do	Hermitage	115	...	3,000 0 0	5 0 0	1 0	68 0 0	...	...
3	Gibson & Howes	Bingera	1,150	40,000 0 0	63,000 0 0	10,500 0 0	70 2	5,655 2 5	180 20	6,621 10 4
4	Nott Brothers	Windermere	630	...	50,000 0 0	2,000 0 0	41 46	2,400 0 0	90 5	4,293 0 0
5	A. P. Barton	Mon Repos	300	...	50,000 0 0	1,150 0 0	32 9	3,707 0 0	84 6	3,196 0 0
6	S. Johnston	Waterloo	270	...	30,000 0 0	500 0 0	13 0	1,248 0 0	51 3	1,755 0 0
7	Buss & Davidson	Pemberton Grange	380	...	30,000 0 0	...	28 0	2,007 4 8	67 5	4,100 11 8
8	Rubyanna Sugar Company	Rubyanna	450	10,000 0 0	35,000 0 0	900 0 0	13 3	1,624 0 0	71 6	2,071 0 0
9	Thomas Penny	Millbank	250	8,000 0 0	21,000 0 0	500 0 0	29 0	1,149 5 10	43 7	1,057 6 9
10	Queensland Investment Company	Kalbar	330	9,000 0 0	20,000 0 0	640 0 0	10 1	952 0 0	35 6	2,181 9 0
11	West & Blisset	Goodwood	400	...	20,000 0 0	1,100 0 0	20 2	1,100 0 0	39 3	1,380 0 0
12	R. Jones	Teeji	260	8,906 0 0	15,586 0 0	802 0 0	18 3	1,278 0 0	60 1	1,100 0 0
13	J. Gaylard	Windsor	150	...	16,000 0 0	600 0 0	23 3	1,610 0 0	45 5	2,040 0 0
14	Mrs. Heathhead	Hopewell	250	8,000 0 0	15,000 0 0	500 0 0	17 3	1,800 0 0	55 2	2,500 0 0
15	H. Palmer & Son	Sharon	300	3,500 0 0	14,500 0 0	998 0 0	16 2	1,200 0 0	65 6	2,100 0 0
16	Buss & Penny	Ashfield	220	8,000 0 0	13,000 0 0	900 0 0	10 0	1,070 0 0	46 2	1,100 0 0
17	Olsen & Gribbner	Kalkie	180	6,700 0 0	11,437 0 0	850 0 0	15 0	1,174 0 0	58 0	1,751 0 0
18	Bonina Sugar Company	Penna	200	...	11,118 0 0	984 0 0	12 0	1,268 11 6	40 2	1,226 3 0
19	Walter Adams	Southerlyville	120	...	10,000 0 0	402 0 0	8 0	431 0 0	27 3	845 15 0
20	Martha Weisell	Bellevue	127	...	9,000 0 0	360 0 0	8 2	520 0 0	23 1	850 0 0
21	R. Lee	Sherwood	150	3,300 0 0	5,425 0 0	665 0 0	10 1	1,100 0 0	10 2	696 0 0
22	R. C. McDouall	Cuba	70	2,500 0 0	3,500 0 0	300 0 0	5 1	243 0 0	2 5	1,040 0 0
23	Notters Brothers	Spring Hill	350	...	28,000 0 0	984 0 0	3 1	200 0 0	49 9	2,096 0 0
24	W. G. Buchanan	Branyan†	150	6,500 0 0	16,500 0 0	500 0 0	...	...	...	...
24			8,474	£119,406 0 0	£567,646 0 0	£30,397 0 0	446 85	£37,080 4 5	1,448 96	£48,966 15 9

* Hermitage black labour included in Fairymead.

† Not working. Estimate only; no return.

W. H. MAY, Secretary Bundaberg Planters' Association.

SCHEDULE B.—RETURN of CRUSHING MILLS for Extracting Juice only, in the BUNDABERG DISTRICT.

—	Name of Owner or Occupant.	Name of Plantation.	Acres under Cane.	Value of Juice Mill (when given).	Total Value Mill and Plantation.	Value of Rolling Stock & Implements.	Number of Whites Employed.	Whites' Wages and Rations per annum.	Number of Blacks Employed.	Blacks' Wages, Rations, and Passages.
				£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	M. F.	£ s. d.	M. F.	£ s. d.
1	Cran Bros & Co.	Dunraggan	...	...	50,000 0 0	1,500 0 0	34 4	2,262 0 0	150 8	4,540 0 0
2	Ferguson & Co.*	Hummock	600	9,252 13 7	35,000 0 0	1,079 3 4	14 2	1,766 11 0	95 7	3,570 17 4
3	P. W. Gladwell	Mawri	240	...	17,750 0 0	650 0 0	7 2	639 10 0	30 0	1,000 0 0
4	Miss Hunter	Grange	340	4,000 0 0	18,925 0 0	774 0 0	6 1	1,332 0 0	60 6	1,541 0 0
5	Buchanan & Denny	Oakwood	350	4,629 12 9	11,582 9 9	1,833 7 0	12 4	1,702 3 10	46 6	1,033 6 15
6	E. Turner	Sunnyside	200	3,000 0 0	11,150 0 0	700 0 0	7 0	685 0 0	45 0	1,420 0 0
7	C. Faulkner	Woodlands	260	3,200 0 0	10,000 0 0	600 0 0	11 2	852 10 0	54 4	2,211 0 0
8	Walker Bros.	Pepias & Hybla	150	...	9,000 0 0	150 0 0	3 2	278 0 0	23 0	777 0 0
9	L. Stauleg	Seaview	185	...	3,145 10 6	587 10 6	4 1	351 0 0	28 3	1,201 0 0
10	S. Lowe	Woodboms	100	...	6,800 0 0	200 0 0	6 2	400 0 0	34 1	750 0 0
11	J. Clarke	Ashgrove	...	...	5,000 0 0	250 0 0	3 1	450 0 0	18 2	670 13 4
12	J. & T. Young	Keppock	200	2,000 0 0	4,700 0 0	300 0 0	5 1	459 0 0	22 2	849 14 6
13	Carl Thoms	Horton	20	...	1,000 0 0	50 0 0	6 0	240 0 0	...	...
14	J. Forrest & Co.	Avocat	150	6,502 0 0	16,500 0 0	500 0 0	...	...	...	...
14			2,855	£32,582 6 4	£203,553 0 3	£9,234 0 10	118 22	£11,330 14 10	£595 39	£19,772 11 7

* Taken by Mr. Ferguson.

† Not working. Estimate only; no return.

W. H. MAY, Secretary Bundaberg Planters' Association.

APPENDIX No. 20—continued.

SCHEDULE C.—RETURN OF CANE-GROWERS only, in the BUNDABERG DISTRICT.

		Name of Owner or Occupant.										Name of Farm.										Acres under Cane.		Number of Whites Employed.		Whites' Wages and Rations per annum.			Number of Blacks Employed.		Blacks' Wages, Rations, Passages, &c.			Cost of Clearing and Planting.		
																								M. F.		£ s. d.			M. F.		£ s. d.			£ s. d.		
1		J. H. Hill	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	South Kolau	...	...	...	...	...	180	12	0	536	0	0	12	0	561	12	0	...	...	...					
2		J. W. King	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Annesley	...	...	...	...	...	140	3	0	225	0	0	4	1	185	0	0	...	...	...					
3		C. and J. Smith	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Tecoma	...	...	...	...	...	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,000	0	0					
4		D. Walker	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Braemar	...	...	...	...	...	90	2	1	130	0	0	7	1	365	0	0	...	...	...					
5		J. C. Grimwood	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Dallinghoo	...	...	...	...	...	88	4	1	400	0	0	6	0	175	0	0	1,012	0	0					
6		J. Neilsen	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mailbank	...	...	...	...	...	80	4	0	264	0	0	10	0	560	0	0	800	0	0					
7		Mrs. Pearse	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Bocana	...	...	...	...	...	45	...	...	...	...	...	4	2	120	0	0	...	...	...					
8		T. Williams	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mangan	...	...	...	...	...	32	...	...	...	...	...	2	0	56	0	0	...	...	...					
9		I. Raddell	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Edenderry	...	...	...	...	...	30	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	300	0	0						
10		J. Newall	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Violet Hill	...	...	...	...	...	25	1	0	78	0	0	4	0	76	0	0	425	0	0					
11		J. Fox	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Dodder Farm	...	...	...	...	...	25	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	575	0	0						
12		C. Hoffman	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Woongarra	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	0	156	0	0	4	0	124	0	0	...	...	...					
13		L. J. Breisch	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Hillside	...	...	...	...	...	22	...	...	...	...	...	1	0	40	0	0	...	...	...					
14		Scott and Walters	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Albion	...	...	...	...	...	20	2	0	82	0	0	3	0	112	10	0	160	0	0					
15		Jens Christensen	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Kalkie	...	...	...	...	...	15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...					
16		A. C. Walker	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Knockroe	...	...	...	...	...	...	8	0	500	0	0	22	0	700	0	0	...	...	...					
17		J. A. Simpson	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Forrest Hill	...	...	...	...	...	18	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	234	0	0						
17																						910	38	2	£2,771	0	0	79	4	£3,075	2	0	£4,500	0	0	

N.B.—The police returns of acreage under cane is furnished to the Registrar-General—no doubt in a complete form.

W. H. MAY, Secretary Bundaberg Planters' Association.

RECAPITULATION.

Schedules.	Nos.	Description.	Acres under Cane.	Value of Mills (where given).	Total Value Mills and Plantations.	Value of Rolling Stock and Implements.	Number of Whites Employed.	Whites' Wages and Rations per annum.	Blacks Employed.	Blacks' Wages, Passages, Rations, Clothing, Medical Attendance, &c.
A	22	Complete mills	8,474	£ 119,406 0 0	576,646 0 0	30,397 0 0	416 85	37,030 4 5	1,448 95	48,966 15 9
B	14	Juicemills	2,855	32,682 6 4	203,553 0 3	9,234 0 10	118 22	11,330 14 10	595 39	19,772 11 7
C	17	Cane-growers	910	...	...	...	38 2	2,771 0 0	79 4	3,075 2 0
			12,239	£151,988 6 4	£771,199 0 3	£39,631 0 10	602 109	£51,181 19 3	2,120 138	£71,812 9 4

N. B.—Messrs. R. Cran and Co.'s Sugar Refinery, which is generally roughly estimated at £150,000, must be added to value of mills and plantations £771,199.
Value of Rolling Stock 39,631.
Value of R. Cran's Refinery—say 150,000.
Showing Capital invested—say £960,830.

W. H. MAY, Secretary Bundaberg Planters' Association.

APPENDIX No. 21.

RETURN OF SUGAR EXPORTED from the Port of BUNDABERG for 1888.

Periods.	EXPORTED BEYOND BORDERS.		EXPORTED COASTWISE.		TOTAL.	
	Tons.	Value.	Tons.	Value.	Tons.	Value
Quarter ended 31st March	1,313	29,247	1,690	29,169	2,933	58,416
Quarter ended 30th June	1,606	32,022	843	15,174	2,449	47,196
Quarter ended 30th September	3,528	69,217	3,257	58,626	6,785	127,843
Quarter ended 31st December	1,345	25,990	2,278	48,977	3,623	74,967
Total	7,792	154,476	7,998	151,946	15,790	308,422
Exports of Sugar for Year 1888	...	...	...	...	...	£308,422
Exports of all other Products, 1888	...	...	...	...	...	54,079
Total Exports	...	...	...	...	...	£362,501

F. KILNER, Sub-Collector.

APPENDIX No. 22.

RETURN OF SAVINGS BANK ACCOUNTS, PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS, MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT, 7TH MARCH, 1889.

Number of Savings Bank accounts to date	80
Amount at credit	£4539 17 3

T. B. SMYTH, Inspector Pacific Islanders.

APPENDIX No. 23.

RETURN OF PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS, MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT, as at 1st JANUARY, 1889.

Number serving under agreement at above date	337
Number of exempt Islanders employed on plantations	23
Number on plantations not working	18
Estimated number walking about, not working, or illegally employed	100

473

Besides the above, there is a good number of exempt Islanders of which there is no record in this office.

T. B. SMYTH, Inspector Pacific Islanders.

APPENDIX No. 24.

RETURN OF ALL SUGARS IMPORTED INTO MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, for Twelve Months from February, 1888, to January, 1889, per Messrs. Fraser and Co., Limited's, Reports (monthly).

Month.	Mauritius.	Java.	Sylhet.	Cuba.	Fiji.	London.	Queensland.	Germany.	Belgium.	Calcutta.	Monthly Total.
1888.											
February	2,808½	751½	279½	283½	385½	181½	134½	...	...	...	4,824½
March	4,110	500	217	479	211½	16	...	...	...	...	5,538½
April	1,767½	...	...	257½	43	37½	494½	...	...	...	2,600
May	618	40	163	...	80½	...	151	...	...	...	1,052½
June	490	...	481	...	7½	...	63	2	...	...	1,003½
July	1,901½	490	160	700	5	...	326½	...	...	...	3,583
August	540	...	113	128½	441	5	1,613½	...	84	581	3,506
September	400	...	243	234	32	...	562½	...	...	...	1,471½
October	285	...	92	1,297½	676½	10	600½	...	...	...	2,963
November	832½	1,839	18½	...	868	...	...	...	...	...	3,563
December	1,110	180½	...	100	465½	80	127½	...	...	...	2,063
1889.											
January	6,071	4,283	...	1,360	465	...	12	...	...	...	12,201
Total	20,914½	8,093½	1,769*	4,840	2,805	337½	4,943½	2	84	581	41,370

NOTE.—The above quantities shown in Tons.

* Presumed to be Queensland Sugar.

APPENDIX No. 25.

RETURN showing NUMBER of SUGAR PLANTATIONS and FARMS under SUGAR CULTIVATION in the Colony of Queensland on 31st March, 1888.

No. of Farms	Name of Owner or Manager.	Plantation or Farm.	Sugar Mills.
BRISBANE DISTRICT.			
1	Connell, A.	Brookfield, Farm	Nil
2	Schultz, W.	Toombul, Nil	Nil
3	Rea, J.	Rosewood, Plantation	1
4	Smith, Thos. L.	Woodlands (Distillery), "	1
5	Gordon, Jas.	Netherwick, "	1
6	Heinemann, H.	Mount Cotton, "	1
7	Paston, or Preston	Mount Cotton, Farm	1
8	Barnett Bros.	Buderim, Plantation	1
9	Fielding and Dickson	Yagalla, "	1
10	Gardener, O.	Normanby (Distillery), "	1
LOGAN DISTRICT.			
11	Sommer, C. A.	Gramzow, Farm	Nil
12	Bahr, W.	Alberton, "	Nil
13	Bruse, M.	"	Nil
14	Ratz, W.	"	Nil
15	Bilgan, G.	"	Nil
16	Bilgan, F.	"	Nil
17	Kruger, C.	Gramzow, "	Nil
18	Lehman, C.	"	Nil
19	Ernst, C.	Alberton, "	Nil
20	Noe, W.	"	Nil
21	Kaia, M.	Beenleigh, "	Nil
22	Stern, A.	Gramzow, "	Nil
23	Fischer, A.	"	Nil
24	Bahr, F.	Gallowood, "	Nil
25	Egersdorf, C.	"	Nil
26	Krebs (Co-operative)	Beenleigh, "	1
27	Opperman, H. P.	Eagleby, Plantation	1
28	Gooding, F.	Beenleigh, Distillery and	1
29	Witty, W. K.	Yatala, "	1
30	Watt, A.	Bannockburn, "	1
31	Couldery, W.	Agoston (Distillery), "	1
32	Pidd, Wm.	Norrill, "	1
33	Heich, H.	Rocky Point, "	1
34	Kleinsmidt, A.	Stegels, "	1
35	Rehfeld, K.	Junction, "	1
36	Markes, T.	Farm	Nil
37	Raibaw, —	"	Nil
38	Harh, —	"	Nil
39	Schwenke, —	"	Nil
40	Parherd, —	"	Nil
41	Doublin, —	"	Nil
42	Euhman, —	"	Nil
43	Mewing, H.	Pioneer, Plantation	1
44	Eishman, A.	Farm	Nil
45	Miors, G.	"	Nil
46	Brumm, K.	"	Nil
47	Grimes, S.	Rockholme, Plantation	1
48	Robinson, A.	Helensvale, "	1
49	Gartside, J.	Olmoor, "	1
50	Rhodes, J.	Riverside, Farm	Nil
51	Lewis, D. M.	Ebenezer (Nerang), Plantation	1
52	Fullerton Bros.	Bundall, "	1
53	Duncan, J.	Benowa, "	1
54	Townley, T.	St. Helena Peal Establishment	1
MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT.			
1	McQuigan, R.	Wallalla, Plantation	1
2	Stephenson, A. P.	Dauvrag, "	Nil
3	Wimb, J.	Fresskow, "	Nil
4	Pettesor or Moes, C. P.	Peacelome, "	Nil
5	Petersen, List J.	Hign Hill, Farm	Nil
6	Herrenberg, Mrs.	Lonojok, "	Nil
7	Groundwater, W. R.	Laurel Bank, "	Nil
8	Hodgkinson, J.	Faves, Plantation	1
9	Kelly, P. O.	Ferney, Farm	1
10	Jones, W. R.	Nerada, Plantation	Nil
11	Cuttler, G.	Maryville, Farm	Nil
12	Kermoske, J.	Clifton, "	Nil
13	Barbeler Bros.	River View, Plantation	1
14	Clarke, John	Easton Vale, "	1
15	Jackson, Lewis	Linton, "	1
16	Garvie, J. M.	Alpha, "	1
17	Weber, C. W.	Rosenburg, "	1

APPENDIX No. 25—continued.

RETURN showing NUMBER of SUGAR PLANTATIONS and FARMS under SUGAR CULTIVATION in the Colony of Queensland on 31st March, 1888—continued.

No. of Farms.	Name of Owner or Manager.	Plantation or Farm.	Sugar Mills.
MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT—continued.			
18	Clarke, R. F. ...	Mona, Plantation ...	1
19	Stewart, James ...	Rosemount, " ...	1
20	Timbrell and Son ...	Apperly, " ...	1
21	Whittaker, John ...	Elizabeth, " ...	1
22	Porter, Ernest G. ...	Genora, " ...	1
23	Mitchell, John ...	Tindah, " ...	Nil
24	Smith, Henry ...	Newitt Hill, " ...	Nil
25	Yates, W. T. ...	Tulano (Tiara), " ...	1
26	Fletcher, A. ...	Myrtle Grove, " ...	1
27	Cameron, J. A. ...	Callart, " ...	1
28	Hall, H. M. ...	Aurora, " ...	1
29	Baldies, Perry ...	Bryum, " ...	1
30	Wilson, W. C. ...	Biribirim, " ...	1
31	Martin, Boyle ...	Preston (Wide Bay) ...	1
32	Goss, Chas. W. ...	Pialba, " ...	1
33	Cran, James ...	Toland (Maryborough) ...	1
34	Not known ...	Antigua, " ...	1
35	Kockener, J. ...	Rosella? ...	1
36	Morton, Thos. ...	Buderum, " ...	Nil
			23
37	Cran, Messrs. ...	Yengarie Refinery ...	1
			24

NOTE.—The most of these mills are simply juice mills, the cane juice being crushed on farms and conveyed by pipes or tanks to Yengarie Refinery. Some few planters still continue to manufacture their own sugar. All distilleries closed in the Maryborough District.

BUNDABERG DISTRICT.

1	Young, A. H. ...	Fairy Mede, Plantation ...	1
2	Young, R. ...	Hermilage, " ...	Nil
3	McDowntt, J. W. ...	Kalbar, " ...	1
4	McDonald, A. ...	Cuba, " ...	1
5	Buchanan, S. ...	Oakwood, " ...	1
6	Pegg, A. ...	Glenmure, Farm ...	Nil
7	Henker, C. ...	Otoo, " ...	Nil
8	Hood, James ...	Sunnyside, " ...	Nil
9	Bock Bros. ...	South Kolan, " ...	Nil
10	Whittington, F. ...	Burnett River, " ...	Nil
11	Jones, R. ...	Tegege, Plantation ...	1
12	Vessel, Martin ...	Bellevue, " ...	Nil
13	Hunt, William ...	Greenwood, Farm ...	Nil
14	Nielson, Jorgen ...	Mail Bank, " ...	Nil
15	Bock, Hans ...	South Kolan, " ...	Nil
16	McKensie, D. ...	South Kolan, " ...	Nil
17	Palmer, H. ...	Sharon, Plantation ...	1
18	Wockman, B. ...	Ballindarry, Farm ...	Nil
19	Hill, J. H. ...	South Kolan, Plantation ...	Nil
20	Gibson and Howes ...	Bingers, " ...	1
21	Johnston, Samuel ...	Waterview, " ...	1
22	Aiken, R. S. ...	Woodooma, " ...	Nil
23	Gladwell, F. W. ...	Mabro, " ...	1
24	Christensen, T. ...	Kalki, Farm ...	Nil
25	Clark and Ford ...	Ashgrove, Plantation ...	1
26	Newell, Jos. ...	Violet Hill, " ...	1
27	Tanner, C. M. ...	The Grange, " ...	1
28	Grinwood, T. C. ...	Dallinghoo, Farm ...	Nil
29	Lee, J. ...	Brampton, " ...	Nil
30	Buss, F. ...	Roseville, " ...	Nil
31	Hamilton, Mrs. ...	Rest of Age, " ...	Nil
32	Mantice, W. ...	Rosentahl, " ...	Nil
33	Noakes Brothers ...	Spring Hill, Plantation ...	1
34	Barton, A. P. ...	Mon Repos, " ...	1
35	Faulkner, C. ...	Woodlands, " ...	1
36	Turner, E. ...	Sunnyside, " ...	1
37	Forrest, T. ...	Avoca, " ...	1
38	Stanig, L. ...	Seaview, " ...	1
39	Fryghar Bros. ...	Itummock, " ...	1
40	Nott Bros. ...	Windermere, " ...	1
41	Rowe, Sam. ...	Woodooma, " ...	1
42	Young, Thos. ...	Keppoch, " ...	1
43	Buss, F. and C. W. ...	Ashfield No. 2, " ...	1
44	Bengisison, N. P. ...	Stoney, Farm ...	Nil
45	Offman, T. H. ...	Donnybrook, " ...	Nil
46	Walker, M. W. ...	Hybla, " ...	Nil

No. of Farms.	Name of Owner or Manager.	Plantation or Farm.	Sugar Mills.
BUNDABERG DISTRICT—continued.			
47	Fox, Jos.	Dodder, Farm ...	Nil
48	Dredge, D.	Sunbury, " ...	Nil
49	Smitt, F.	Rise and Shine, " ...	Nil
50	Pearce, F. T.	Boconnick, " ...	Nil
51	Walker, A. C.	Bingers, " ...	Nil
52	Coomber, A. T.	Fig-tree, " ...	Nil
53	Carlson, C. and M.	Freedham, " ...	Nil
54	Hicksen, W. M. C.	Rubyanna, Plantation ...	1
55	Nielson, P.	Rosewood, Farm ...	Nil
56	Lee, R.	Sherwood, Plantation ...	Nil
57	Gayland, T.	Windsor Park, " ...	1
58	Pringle, T.	Bonna Sugar Co., " ...	1
59	Goodwin, C. H.	Branyan, " ...	1
60	Penny, Tom	Milbank, " ...	1
61	Greathead, Ann... ..	Hopewell, " ...	1
62	Bertheau, T. H.	Sommerville, " ...	1
63	Buss and Davidson	Pemberton Grange, " ...	1
64	Ditto	Glenmorris, " ...	1
65	Simpson, C. A.	Forrest Hill, Farm ...	Nil
66	Jacobson, L.	Caspian, " ...	Nil
67	Moon, W. G.	Ashton, " ...	Nil
68	Lagreen, A.	Waterfield, " ...	Nil
69	King, T. W.	Annersley, Plantation ...	Nil
70	Olsen Bros.	Kalkie, " ...	1
71	Carlson, T. A.	Freedham, Farm ...	Nil
72	Williams, Thos.	Mangan, " ...	Nil
73	Walker, T. Y.	The Poplars, " ...	Nil
74	Christensen, A.	Milan, " ...	Nil
75	Matzka, A.	Live Farm, " ...	Nil
76	Matton, C.	Chappleton, " ...	Nil
77	Davenport, G.	Davenport, " ...	Nil
78	Smith, T. T.	Tecoma, Plantation ...	Nil
79	Jensen, N. C.	Stoopie, Farm ...	Nil
80	Hurlebans, T.	Stone Hill, " ...	Nil
81	Nott, H. O.	Vine Garden, " ...	Nil
82	Breusel, L. T.	Mary Va'e, " ...	Nil
83	Arsstall, T.	Forge Farm, " ...	Nil
84	Watson, D.	Braemar, " ...	Nil
85	Sherrington, A.	Everton, " ...	Nil
	Messrs Cran	Millaquin Refinery ...	Nil
This appears to be the most flourishing district in the colony. A large number of planters and farmers simply crush the cane and send the juice to refinery. 19,422 tons of sugar made the last season.			
MACKAY DISTRICT.			
1	Hable Bros.	No name, Farm ...	Nil
2	Anderson, W. C.	" " " "	Nil
3	Smith, A. (manager)	Victoria, Plantation ...	1
4	Luid, G. M. A.	No name, Farm ...	Nil
5	Carter, A. B. (manager)	Ashurton, Plantation ...	1
6	McKinnon and Co., Melbourne	Pioneer, " ...	Nil
7	No name ...	Greenmount, Farm ...	Nil
8	Steedman, H. (manager)	Pleystowe (Distillery), Plantation ...	1
9	No name ...	Balnagowan, Farm ...	Nil
10	Davidson, J. Ewen	Alexandra (Distillery), Plantation ...	1
11	Melbourne-Mackay Sugar Co.	Nebia, " ...	Nil
12	Watson, ———	No name, Farm ...	Nil
13	Kemp, C.	River Estate, " ...	Nil
14	No name ...	Calrossie, " ...	Nil
15	Robinson, H. (manager)	To Kowai (Distillery), Plantation ...	1
16	Melbourne-Mackay Sugar Co.	Peru, " ...	Nil
17	No name ...	Foulden, Farm ...	Nil
18	Joslym, R.	No name " ...	Nil
19	Leon, ———	" " " "	Nil
20	Sandford, ———	" " " "	Nil
21	Christesen, H. C.	" " " "	Nil
22	Stephens, F. T.	" " " "	Nil
23	Nielson, H.	" " " "	Nil
24	Matzen, A.	" " " "	Nil
25	Ironside, G.	" " " "	Nil
26	Autom, T.	" " " "	Nil
27	Smith, R. G. (manager)	Hotnebusi, Plantation ...	1
28	Colonial Sugar Refinery Coy., Sydney	Onhenden, " ...	Nil
29	Porter, John	No name, Farm ...	Nil
30	Christensen, T. M.	" " " "	Nil
31	Peterson, N.	" " " "	Nil

APPENDIX No. 25—continued.

RETURN showing NUMBER of SUGAR PLANTATIONS and FARMS under SUGAR CULTIVATION in the Colony of Queensland on 31st March, 1888—continued.

No. of Farms.	Name of Owner or Manager.	Plantation or Farm.	Sugar Mills.
MACKAY DISTRICT—continued.			
32	Draper, A.	No name	Farm ... Nil
33	Hess, T. G.	"	" ... Nil
34	Bridgeman, R.	"	" ... Nil
35	Estate, R.	"	" ... Nil
36	Cartury, — ...	"	" ... Nil
37	McBride, T. (manager) ...	Richmond.	Plantation ... 1
38	McBride, Finlayson, and Poolman ...	Inverness,	" ... Nil
39	Kenny, T.	No name,	Farm ... Nil
40	Kenny, T.	"	" ... Nil
41	No name ...	Richmond No. 2	" ... Nil
42	Henderson, A. (manager) ...	Beaconsfield.	Plantation ... 1
43	Dunne, R. D. (manager) ...	Barrie,	" ... 1
44	Ditto ...	Barrie,	Farm ... Nil
45	No name ...	River Estate,	" ... Nil
46	Robertson, Wm.	No name,	" ... Nil
47	Belday, E.	"	" ... Nil
48	Codnan, R.	"	" ... Nil
49	McCann, — ...	"	" ... Nil
50	Clarke, — ...	"	" ... Nil
51	Totto, Henry ...	"	" ... Nil
52	Adrian, W. S. C.	Mount Pleasant.	Plantation ... 1
53	Hendry, — ...	No name,	Farm ... Nil
54	Joselyn, R.	"	" ... Nil
55	Cowley, J.	"	" ... Nil
56	Rogers, — ...	"	" ... Nil
57	Judes, A.	"	" ... Nil
58	Gennrick, C.	"	" ... Nil
59	Carey, T.	"	" ... Nil
60	Browne, C. Wade ...	"	" ... Nil
61	Ah Sin, Jimmy ...	"	" ... Nil
62	Gestle, — ...	"	" ... Nil
63	Ah Sin, Jimmy ...	"	" ... Nil
64	Ah Wop, Ling ...	"	" ... Nil
65	Shinekee, — ...	"	" ... Nil
66	Walker, J.	"	" ... Nil
67	Landells, Wm.	"	" ... Nil
68	Lunberg, L.	"	" ... Nil
69	Ryan, T.	"	" ... Nil
70	Smytenskee, — ...	"	" ... Nil
71	Oleson, — ...	"	" ... Nil
72	Enwright, M.	"	" ... Nil
73	Florence, A.	"	" ... Nil
74	Hyne and Co.	Meadowlands,	Plantation ... 1
75	Ringuet, — ...	No name,	Farm ... Nil
76	Rorkleigh, — ...	"	" ... Nil
77	Ronalds, Mrs.	"	" ... Nil
78	Foulden, — ...	"	" ... Nil
79	Clarkson, Dr.	"	" ... Nil
80	Lloyd, A. H.	"	" ... Nil
81	Willett, T.	"	" ... Nil
82	Solway, T.	"	" ... Nil
83	Hynes, Wm.	"	" ... Nil
84	Archer, W. (Manager) ...	River Estate,	Plantation ... 1
85	Ah Sen. — ...	No name,	Farm ... Nil
86	Schaffer, T.	"	" ... Nil
87	Petersen, A. A.	"	" ... Nil
88	Craiger, — ...	"	" ... Nil
89	Leivens, — ...	"	" ... Nil
90	McCready, Hugh ...	Palmyra,	Plantation ... 1
91	Irvie, — ...	No name,	Farm ... Nil
92	Cassada, — ...	"	" ... Nil
93	No name ...	Glondareh,	" ... Nil
94	Wales, Wm.	No name,	" ... Nil
95	Laws, Sir F. B. England; Betton, F. W. (manager) ...	Farleigh,	Plantation ... 1
96	Voysey, G.	No name,	Farm ... Nil
97	Denham, — ...	"	" ... Nil
98	Paget, W. T. (manager) ...	Nindaroo,	Plantation ... 1
99	No name ...	Richmond No. 2,	Farm ... Nil
100	Ditto ...	Spring Vale.	" ... Nil
101	Ditto ...	Mandanna,	" ... Nil
102	Barry, J.	No name,	" ... Nil
103	Avery, T. G.	Coningsby,	Plantation ... 1
104	Bounson, — ...	No name,	Farm ... Nil
105	Millicent, — ...	"	" ... Nil
106	No name ...	Avon Farm,	" ... Nil
107	Brackenbury and Jones ...	No name,	" ... Nil
108	No name ...	Acacia Vale,	" ... Nil
109	Ditto ...	Rockton,	" ... Nil
110	Long, Ell. (manager) ...	Habana,	Plantation ... 1

APPENDIX No. 25—continued.

RETURN showing NUMBER OF SUGAR PLANTATIONS AND FARMS under SUGAR CULTIVATION in the Colony of Queensland on 31st March, 1888—continued.

No. of Farms.	Name of Owner or Manager.	Plantation or Farm.	Sugar Mills.
MACKAY DISTRICT—continued.			
111	No. name	Green Vale, Farm	Nil
112	Ditto	Western Farm,	Nil
113	Flood, M.	No name,	Nil
114	McLanaghan, —	"	Nil
115	Pence, T.	"	Nil
116	Hendy, —	"	Nil
117	Miller, Thos.	"	Nil
118	T—ty	"	Nil
119	No name	Stephens Farm	Nil
120	McSherry, —	No name,	Nil
121	McKenzie, A. R. (manager)	Marion Mill (Central Mill),	1
122	Langford, B.	No name,	Nil
123	Baumgarten, F.	"	Nil
124	Dingle, —	"	Nil
125	Coyne, David	"	Nil
126	Willork, C. T.	"	Nil
127	Krutz, A. G.	"	Nil
128	Rich, Carl	"	Nil
129	Waddatz, A.	"	Nil
	Erected by Queensland Government...	Racecourse Central Mill	1
	" " " "	Eton Central Mill	1
Inspector Connor states: 19 farmers, representing 246 acres are to crush at Racecourse Mill, 1888-9 season; and 12 farmers, representing 390 acres, will send cane to Eton Mill same season.			
16,062 tons Sugar. 1888. 16,138 tons, 1887.			
NOTE.—I should imagine the lands in this District were showing signs of exhaustion, seeing that 12,309 acres were cut for 16,138 tons 1887, against 14,361 acres in 1888 to make 16,062 tons.—D. C.			
COOK DISTRICT.			
1	Hislop, George	Myzalla, Plantation	Nil
2	McDougall, Robert	Vitele (Weary Bay), "	1
JOHNSTONE RIVER AND CARDWELL.			
1	Canny, William (manager)	Innishowan, Plantation	1
2	Adams, Chas.	Goondi, "	1
3	Ledging, R.	Moorilyan, "	1
4	Dempsey, T.	Innisfail, "	1
CAIRNS DISTRICT.			
1	Williams, O. (manager)	Hambleton (Swallow-Derhand), Plantation	1
2	Langdon, Wm.	Pyramid, "	1
ROCKHAMPTON DISTRICT.			
1	Yeppoon Sugar Company, Limited (Alwiwin, secretary, or Henry Koss, manager)	Yeppoon, Plantation	1
MURDEKIN, TOWNSVILLE.			
1	Young, Chas. (manager)	Kalamia, Plantation	1
2	McKenzie, J. (owner)	Seaforth, "	1
3	New Zealand Loan and Mortgage Company	Ardmillan, "	Nil
4	Oliver, William	Trent, "	Nil
5	Oliver, William	Norham, "	Nil
6	Munro, C.	Drynie, "	1
7	Drysdale, John	Pioneer, "	1
8	Ahearne, Dr.	Maida Vale, "	Nil
HERBERT RIVER, INGHAM.			
1	Forster, C. E. (manager)	Victoria, Plantation	1
2	Cowley, L. J.	Gairloch, "	1
3	Anderson, A.	No name, Farm	Nil
4	Alm, T.	"	Nil
5	Herron, F.	"	Nil
6	Hoffeusetz, H.	"	Nil
7	Rosendal, W.	"	Nil
8	Carr, A. W.	"	Nil
9	Waller, Bros.	"	Nil
10	Laddams, W.	"	Nil
11	Watson, C.	"	Nil
12	Williams, T.	"	Nil
13	Radford, E. T.	"	Nil
14-15	Kerron, T.—Norman, W.	"	Nil
16	Nankivell, —	"	Nil
17	Blackmore, R. G. (manager)	Hawleigh, Plantation	1
18	Trail and Co.	Trebonne, "	Nil
19	Neame and Co.	Macknade, "	1
20	Wood Bros. and Boyd	Ripple Creek, "	1

W. H. IRVING,
For Chief Inspector of Distilleries and Excise.

APPENDIX No. 26.

RETURN showing NUMBER of SUGAR PLANTATIONS and FARMS in SUGAR CULTIVATION for the last SEVEN YEARS in the Colony of Queensland, with NUMBER of SUGAR MILLS and ACREAGE under SUGAR-CANE in each District.

DISTRICT.	SEASON 1881-2. (31st March, 1882.)			SEASON 1882-3. (31st March, 1883.)			SEASON 1883-4. (31st March, 1884.)			SEASON 1884-5. (31st March, 1885.)			SEASON 1885-6. (31st March, 1886.)			SEASON 1886-7. (31st March, 1887.)			SEASON 1887-8. (31st March, 1888.)			REMARKS.	
	Plan- tations and Farms.	Acres under Cane.	Sugar Mills.	Plan- tations and Farms.	Acres under Cane.	Sugar Mills.	Plan- tations and Farms.	Acres under Cane.	Sugar Mills.	Plan- tations and Farms.	Acres under Cane.	Sugar Mills.	Plan- tations and Farms.	Acres under Cane.	Sugar Mills.	Plan- tations and Farms.	Acres under Cane.	Sugar Mills.	Plan- tations and Farms.	Acres under Cane.	Sugar Mills.		
Brisbane	20	1,567	22	21	1,732	22	18	1,471	20	35	2,015	25	22	1,322	21	7	770	18	10	511	8	3	
Logan	24	3,051	26	30	3,572	30	39	4,289	37	70	4,280	40	41	3,841	33	28	2,340	31	54	1,441	18	1	
Maryborough	30	4,981	28	46	4,760	28	53	4,842	37	60	5,161	31	58	4,813	35	59	3,973	33	37	2,527	23	1 omitted	
Bundaberg	48	2,154	6	61	5,088	19	70	7,143	26	86	9,786	28	90	11,581	31	89	12,925	33	85	11,735	34		
Mackay	104	9,801	19	148	14,575	18	157	16,963	25	138	18,210	25	124	17,921	26	123	15,939	26	128	15,366	18	2 erected	
Port Douglas and Cairns	1	5	Nil	1	230	1	4	1,680	2	4	1,808	4	3	1,939	3	3	1,937	3	2	1,420	2	Central Mills	
Rockhampton	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	100	Nil	3	211	Nil	1	135	Nil	1	234	1	1	365	1	1	475	1		
Burdekin and Townsville	5	109	2	8	502	Nil	7	2,761	1	9	3,574	5	7	3,054	5	8	2,013	4	8	2,594	4		
Johnstone River	Nil	Nil	Nil	9	288	Nil	9	1,786	1	15	1,844	3	7	2,560	4	4	2,500	4	4	2,360	4		
Herbert River	6	475	Nil	5	1,280	2	Nil	Nil	2	14	5,451	5	13	5,608	5	17	5,539	5	20	4,027	5		
Bowen	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	6	Nil	2	200	...	2	310	1	2	362	1	1	250	1	Nil	Nil	1		
Cook	Nil	Nil	Nil	4	26	Nil	5	41	1	4	711	1	3	745	1	2	551	1	2	529	1		
	247	22,143	103	335	32,159	120	367	41,367	152	438	53,285	168	371	53,980	166	342	49,102	160	351	42,985	119	=122	
Distilleries at work {	...	7	...	...	6	...	...	6	...	...	8	...	...	9	...	...	9	...	...	11	...		
	...	...	...	...	*1	...	...	...	...	...	*1	...	...	...	...	...	*1	...	...	...	...		
					7						7												

* Brandy.

W. H. IRVING,
For Chief Commissioner of Distilleries and Excise.

APPENDIX No. 27.
(From Chief Inspector of Distilleries' Report for 1887-8.)

H.

STATEMENT OF SUGAR AND RUM MANUFACTURED, IMPORTED, AND EXPORTED DURING THE YEARS FROM 1870 TO 1888.

	1870 to 31st March 1871.	1871 to 31st March 1872.	1872 to 31st March 1873.	1873 to 31st March 1874.	1874 to 31st March 1875.	1875 to 31st March 1876.	1876 to 31st March 1877.	1877 to 31st March 1878.	1878 to 31st March 1879.
Sugar manufactured (tons)	2,854½	3,762½	6,266½	7,978½	12,108	6,222	8,214	12,243½	13,525½
Molasses „ (gallons)	177,656	219,694	357,619	442,253	651,259	438,950	416,415	490,260	570,301
Sugar imported (tons)	2,090½	1,572	1,185	1,558	1,022	1,445	891½	382	280
Sugar exported (tons)	14	392½	1,154	1,431	5,665	2,894	1,134	6,052	5,072
Rum distilled (gallons)	124,665	112,979	161,473	164,113	217,701	343,214	183,243	196,001	216,395
Rum imported (gallons)	21,142	1,326	6,639	9,278	11,821	13,684	15,065	14,504	10,269
Rum exported (gallons)	...	...	...	...	...	...	90,147	87,295	59,156
Sugar Mills working (No.)	39	55	65	66	71	66	70	59	68
Distilleries working (No.)	10	11	9	10	11	14	12	10	12

	1879 to 31st Mar. 1880.	1880 to 31st Mar. 1881.	1881 to 31st Mar. 1882.	1882 to 31st Mar. 1883.	1883 to 31st Mar. 1884.	1884 to 31st Mar. 1885.	1885 to 31st Mar. 1886.	1886 to 31st Mar. 1887.	1887 to 31st Mar. 1888.
Sugar manufactured (tons)	18,714	15,564	19,051½	15,702	36,148	32,010	59,225½	56,859	57,960
Molasses „ (gallons)	641,486	602,960	753,658	663,825	1,071,413	804,613	1,784,266	1,510,308	1,421,430
Sugar imported (tons)	291	185	214	324	274	454	682	400-9	412½
Sugar exported (tons)	12,001	7,721	8,425	5,020	22,199	15,167	37,701	44,975	39,115
Rum distilled (gallons)	238,710	201,111	157,325	149,428	144,073	133,708-3	159,122-7	97,375-8	47,325-6
Rum imported (gallons)	6,933	10,791	9,960	21,124	48,880	57,550	36,458	24,698	38,044
Rum exported (gallons)	92,629	68,792	84,854	28,246	21,063	38,854	33,090	28,169	22,462
Sugar Mills working (No.)	70	83	103	120	152	166	166	160	118
Distilleries working (No.)	9	9	7	6	6	7	9	10	11

W. H. IRVING,
For Chief Inspector of Distilleries and Excise.

APPENDIX No. 28.

RETURN showing the QUANTITY OF REFINED SUGAR IMPORTED into the undermentioned COLONIES during the YEAR ended 31st December, 1887.

	Queensland.	New South Wales.	Victoria.	Tasmania.	New Zealand.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
United Kingdom	241½	93	1,692½	39½	...
New South Wales	7	...	481½	...	...
Victoria	61½	114	...	17½	...
Queensland	...	2	5,084	...	...
South Australia	51½	43	375½	...	...
New Zealand	...	...	13½	...	...
Hong Kong	0½	...	3,781½	...	...
China	...	...	235½	...	...
France	...	6	140½	...	...
Germany	...	4	104	...	...
United States of America	0½	26	2,233½	...	...
Belgium	...	10	2½	...	...
Natal	...	...	29½	...	...
Sourabaya	...	...	1,135½	...	...
Mauritius	...	...	4,287½	...	...
Fiji Islands	...	...	445½	...	...
Total	45½	298	20,511½	57½	13,996

* Not including Beet Sugar, 490 tons.

H.M. Customs,
Brisbane, 31st December, 1888.

T. M. KING,
Collector of Customs.

APPENDIX No. 29.

RETURN showing the QUANTITY OF MOLASSES AND TREACLE Imported into the undermentioned COLONIES during the YEAR ended 31st December, 1887.

	Queensland.	New South Wales.	Victoria.	Tasmania.	New Zealand.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
United Kingdom	216½	403½	46½	8½	...
New South Wales	69½	...	944	13½	...
Victoria	2½	27½	...	23½	...
Queensland	...	0½	179½	...	...
South Australia	0½	9½	5½	...	...
Hong Kong	0½	...	...	...	...
United States of America	34½	129½	131½	...	...
Fiji Islands	...	6	43	...	...
New Caledonia	...	8½	...	...	...
Total	322½	585½	1,840½	45½	187½

H.M. Customs,
Brisbane, 31st December, 1888.

T. M. KING,
Collector of Customs.

APPENDIX No. 30.

RETURN showing the QUANTITY of RUM Imported into the undermentioned COLONIES during the YEAR ended 31st December, 1887.

	Queensland.	New South Wales.	Victoria.	Tasmania.	New Zealand.
	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.
United Kingdom ...	18,584	247,062	61,428	9,854	...
New South Wales ...	13,117	...	16,357	2,059	...
Victoria ...	2,303	3,680	...	4,846	...
Queensland ...	...	7,308	3	...	...
South Australia ...	167	3,609	1,626	...	...
Western Australia ...	...	...	74	...	...
New Zealand ...	...	...	220	...	...
France ...	...	16	2,449	...	...
Germany ...	...	...	6	...	...
Singapore ...	...	...	12,000	...	...
Mauritius ...	...	...	8,854	...	...
Fiji Islands ...	...	...	3,109	...	...
Total ...	34,171	261,581	106,125	16,769	30,507

H.M. Customs, Brisbane,
31st December, 1888.

T. M. KING,
Collector of Customs.

APPENDIX No. 31.

RETURN showing the QUANTITY of RAW SUGAR Imported into the undermentioned COLONIES during the YEAR ended 31st December, 1887.

* From Whence.	Queensland.	New South Wales.	*Victoria.	Tasmania.	New Zealand.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
United Kingdom ...	9 ²⁵ / ₁₆	704	194 ¹¹ / ₁₆	373 ³ / ₁₆	...
New South Wales ...	99 ¹¹ / ₁₆	...	803 ¹⁰ / ₁₆	1,515 ¹⁰ / ₁₆	...
Victoria ...	212 ¹¹ / ₁₆	2,807	...	2,866 ¹⁰ / ₁₆	...
Queensland ...	...	14,791	15,939 ¹¹ / ₁₆	...	...
South Australia ...	28	757	36 ¹¹ / ₁₆	...	...
Tasmania ...	...	10	5 ¹⁰ / ₁₆	...	...
New Zealand ...	...	194	2 ¹⁰ / ₁₆	...	...
Hong Kong ...	0 ²⁵ / ₁₆	2,451	...	...	...
China ...	...	189	...	...	...
France ...	...	57	...	...	...
Germany ...	...	203	...	...	...
United States of America ...	...	...	...	50	...
Egypt ...	...	24	...	...	...
Natal ...	...	...	53 ¹¹ / ₁₆	...	...
Mauritius ...	...	...	6,206 ¹¹ / ₁₆	710	...
Sourabaya ...	...	...	4,371 ¹⁰ / ₁₆	...	...
Ikalongan ...	...	...	1,550	...	...
Probolinggo ...	...	...	895	...	...
Cheribon ...	...	...	925	...	...
Tagal ...	...	...	1,125	...	...
Filipinap ...	...	...	1,150	...	...
Samarang ...	...	...	1,250	...	...
Fiji Islands ...	...	3,354	2,534 ¹¹ / ₁₆	...	...
	28 ¹⁰ / ₁₆	...	...	...	...
Total ...	350 ¹¹ / ₁₆	25,994	37,134 ¹¹ / ₁₆	5,179 ¹¹ / ₁₆	9,917

* Not including beet sugar.

H.M. Customs,
Brisbane, 31st December, 1888.

T. M. KING,
Collector of Customs.

APPENDIX No. 32.

RETURN showing the RATES of DUTIES in FORCE on the undermentioned ARTICLES in the various COLONIES of AUSTRALASIA.

	SUGAR.		Molasses.	For Rum.
	Refined.	Raw.		
Queensland ...	6s. 8d. per cwt.	{ Glucose, 10s. per cwt. }	5s. per cwt. ...	12s. per gallon
New South Wales ...	6s. 8d. "	{ 5s. per cwt. ... }	3s. 4d. per cwt. ...	14s. "
Victoria ...	{ Beet, 6s. per cwt. }	{ Other, 3s. per cwt. ... }	3s. " and free	12s. "
South Australia ...	3s. per cwt. ...	3s. per cwt. ...	3s. " "	14s. "
Western Australia ...	4s. " "	4s. " "	4s. " "	15s. "
Tasmania ...	Loaf and crushed, 1d. per lb.	All other, 6s. per cwt. ...	3s. 6d. " "	12s. "
New Zealand ...	1d. per lb. ...	1d. per lb. ...	1d. per lb. ...	{ Case, 16s. per gallon { Bulk, 15s. "

H.M. Customs,
Brisbane, 22nd December, 1888.

T. M. KING,
Collector of Customs.

APPENDIX No. 33.

RETURN showing the QUANTITY and VALUE of SUGAR (RAW), SUGAR (REFINED), MOLASSES, and RUM, EXPORTED from QUEENSLAND during the YEARS 1881 to 1887 inclusive.

	1881.		1882.		1883.		1884.		1885.		1886.		1887.	
	Tons.	£	Tons.	£	Tons.	£	Tons.	£	Tons.	£	Tons.	£	Tons.	£
SUGAR (RAW)—														
United Kingdom ...	0 ¹ / ₂	9					31 ¹ / ₂	1,010	71 ¹ / ₂	1,217	1,200 ¹ / ₂	20,041	1,435 ¹ / ₂	23,102
New South Wales ...	6,620 ¹ / ₂	176,162	5,706 ¹ / ₂	139,562	14,202 ¹ / ₂	372,751	9,922 ¹ / ₂	238,707	15,717	271,738	17,887 ¹ / ₂	338,414	20,636 ¹ / ₂	339,004
Victoria ...			110 ¹ / ₂	3,060	3,365 ¹ / ₂	95,535	3,815 ¹ / ₂	86,276	12,603 ¹ / ₂	235,530	9,387 ¹ / ₂	190,564	9,930 ¹ / ₂	177,688
South Australia ...	3	70	3	70			18 ¹ / ₂	440	400 ¹ / ₂	6,088	368 ¹ / ₂	5,415	89 ¹ / ₂	15,883
Western Australia ...												100		
Tasmania ...									42 ¹ / ₂	605	3 ¹ / ₂	60	68 ¹ / ₂	1,203
New Zealand ...			15 ¹ / ₂	300	646 ¹ / ₂	17,074	1,077 ¹ / ₂	27,805	603 ¹ / ₂	12,715	78 ¹ / ₂	10,565	802 ¹ / ₂	13,026
Hongkong ...									803 ¹ / ₂	12,993	3,587 ¹ / ₂	56,130	961 ¹ / ₂	13,140
New Guinea ...	0 ¹ / ₂	9	0 ¹ / ₂	5					0 ¹ / ₂	21	1 ¹ / ₂	38	7 ¹ / ₂	130
Foreign Fisheries ...	4 ¹ / ₂	146												
South Sea Islands ...	2 ¹ / ₂	48	5 ¹ / ₂	159	6 ¹ / ₂	180	7 ¹ / ₂	191	4 ¹ / ₂	87	4 ¹ / ₂	82	3 ¹ / ₂	71
Total ...	6,631 ¹ / ₂	176,444	5,841 ¹ / ₂	143,146	18,220 ¹ / ₂	485,540	14,873 ¹ / ₂	354,429	30,246 ¹ / ₂	540,994	33,250 ¹ / ₂	621,929	34,728 ¹ / ₂	603,747
SUGAR (REFINED)—														
United Kingdom ...							3,13 ¹ / ₂	87,574	5,996 ¹ / ₂	147,755	85	1,830		
New South Wales ...	965 ¹ / ₂	30,736	289	9,014	1,650	53,220	420	12,060	31,401	2,435	6,001 ¹ / ₂	124,395	2,878 ¹ / ₂	60,775
Victoria ...							0 ¹ / ₂	30	1 ¹ / ₂	27	1,204	43,700	2,754 ¹ / ₂	50,072
South Australia ...											184	3,880	698	16,657
Tasmania ...														
New Zealand ...									25	725	1,341 ¹ / ₂	28,310	828	17,925
New Guinea ...							0 ¹ / ₂	7	10 ¹ / ₂	5				
South Sea Islands ...					0 ¹ / ₂	21	0 ¹ / ₂	19	0 ¹ / ₂	14	0 ¹ / ₂	3	1 ¹ / ₂	39
Total ...	965 ¹ / ₂	30,736	289	9,014	1,650 ¹ / ₂	53,241	3,567 ¹ / ₂	100,330	7,166 ¹ / ₂	179,927	11,250 ¹ / ₂	233,575	7,162 ¹ / ₂	154,468
MOLASSES—														
New South Wales ...	1,221 ¹ / ₂	10,653	1,975 ¹ / ₂	8,389	1,099 ¹ / ₂	4,640	665 ¹ / ₂	2,637	188 ¹ / ₂	1,160	148 ¹ / ₂	702	144 ¹ / ₂	563
Victoria ...					283 ¹ / ₂	1,637	641 ¹ / ₂	1,940	523 ¹ / ₂	3,046	221 ¹ / ₂	1,068	159 ¹ / ₂	486
South Australia ...								3					11 ¹ / ₂	88
Western Australia ...											31	111	2 ¹ / ₂	11
Tasmania ...													8 ¹ / ₂	36
New Zealand ...													60 ¹ / ₂	307
New Guinea ...														
South Sea Islands ...	0 ¹ / ₂	8	0 ¹ / ₂	4	0 ¹ / ₂	9	0 ¹ / ₂	4	0 ¹ / ₂	1				
Total ...	1,222 ¹ / ₂	10,661	1,975 ¹ / ₂	8,393	1,384 ¹ / ₂	6,286	1,308 ¹ / ₂	4,581	717 ¹ / ₂	4,207	400 ¹ / ₂	1,881	368 ¹ / ₂	1,491
COLONIAL RUM—														
United Kingdom ...	1,674	226	53	12	41	10	1,127	218	20	5	639	90		
New South Wales ...	93,546	12,959	49,939	6,657	12,455	2,096	24,597	3,490	11,890	2,313	22,131	2,425	13,382	1,579
Victoria ...							26,973	2,570	16,913	2,124	14,293	1,713	2,355	313
South Australia ...			12	3			10	3	1,194	140	689	61	131	21
Tasmania ...									520	66	546	84		
New Zealand ...									149	21	397	60		
Java ...	66	12												
Guam ...			10	2										
United States of America ...	10	2							10	3			26	4
Foreign Fisheries ...	93	21												
New Guinea ...			40	9		9			184	30	10	2	52	10
South Sea Islands ...	313	82	653	141	569	134	327	74	131	39	179	41	226	50
Total ...	95,702	13,302	50,707	6,824	13,085	2,249	47,034	6,455	34,011	4,741	38,787	4,528	16,372	1,983

APPENDIX No. 34.

QUANTITY of SUGAR, MOLASSES, and RUM IMPORTED into SOUTH AUSTRALIA from the different Countries during the YEAR 1887.

Sugar—		Cwt.	Molasses—		Cwt.
Great Britain	...	13,897	Great Britain	...	4,197
Victoria	...	127,723	Victoria	...	1,279
New South Wales	...	9,498	New South Wales	...	289
Western Australia	...	82	United States	...	1,130
Queensland	...	4,687	Total	...	6,895
Mauritius	...	76,628			
Natal	...	17,378	Rum—		Gallons.
Hongkong	...	6,169	Great Britain	...	6,577
Egypt	...	98	Victoria	...	2,777
Germany	...	71	New South Wales	...	3,181
United States	...	14,040	Western Australia	...	2
Total	...	270,266	Germany	...	147
			Total	...	12,684

19th December, 1888.

FRED. J. SANDERSON,
Collector H.M. Customs, Port Adelaide.

APPENDIX No. 35.

RETURN showing the QUANTITY and VALUE of SUGAR, MOLASSES, and RUM IMPORTED into WESTERN AUSTRALIA during the YEAR ended 31st DECEMBER, 1887.

Sugar, Molasses, and Treacle.		Quantity. Tons cwt.	Value. £
United Kingdom	...	91 2	...
New South Wales	...	12 11	...
Queensland	...	0 5	...
Victoria	...	731 9	...
South Australia	...	511 12	...
New Zealand	...	0 11	...
Singapore	...	53 5	...
Hongkong	...	30 0	...
China	...	20 6	...
India	...	1 13	...
Mauritius	...	559 0	...
Totals	...	2,011 14	56,329
Rum.		Quantity. Gallons.	Value. £
United Kingdom	...	7,954	...
New South Wales	...	82	...
Victoria	...	2,183	...
South Australia	...	495	...
Singapore	...	27	...
Mauritius	...	307	...
Totals	...	11,043	1,933

H.M. Customs, Brisbane,
27th December, 1888.

T. M. KING,
Collector of Customs.

APPENDIX No. 36.

RETURN required by the MACKAY CHAMBER of COMMERCE for the information of the ROYAL SUGAR INDUSTRY COMMISSION, Compiled by H.M. Customs, Mackay.

Year.	Total Value of Imports.	Total Value of Exports	Total Value of Goods Removed Coastwise.	Total Value Shipments from Mackay.
1880	59,039	44,243	184,699	228,942
1881	97,347	64,793	137,587	202,380
1882	169,298	71,006	160,235	231,241
1883	326,191	153,303	...	...
1884	143,691	78,739	131,349	210,088
1885	100,593	67,914	214,310	282,224
1886	100,834	261,979	57,141	319,120
1887	125,730	259,282	43,147	302,429
1888	91,128	74,908	62,621	137,529

E. R. N. McCARTHY, Sub-Collector.

APPENDIX No. 37.

RETURN REQUIRED BY THE MACKAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE ROYAL SUGAR INDUSTRY COMMISSION, Compiled by H.M. Customs, Mackay.

Year.	SUGAR IMPORTED.		Value of Machinery Imported.	SUGAR EXPORTED.		SUGAR REMOVED COASTWISE.		TOTAL SUGAR SHIPPED FROM THE PORT OF MACKAY.		COLONIAL SUGAR EXPORTED.		COLONIAL SUGAR REMOVED COASTWISE.		TOTAL QUANTITY COLONIAL SUGAR SHIPPED FROM PORT MACKAY.		Year.
	Weight.	Value.		Weight.	Value.	Weight.	Value.	Weight.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	
1880	215	£ 2,351	£ 3,469	Tons 1,094	£ 30,417	Tons 6,898	£ 172,425	Tons 7,992	£ 202,842	Galls. 20,817	£ 2,093	Galls. 39,900	£ 5,486	Galls. 60,717	£ 7,579	1880
1881	576	4,252	21,357	2,133	50,943	5,205	125,215	7,338	176,159	15,304	2,241	15,726	2,095	31,030	4,336	1881
1882	721	9,958	57,466	2,463	60,001	5,272	126,690	7,735	186,691	5,504	822	65,698	10,184	71,202	11,006	1882
1883	910	11,092	50,156	5,870	145,718	...	...	...	...	183	37	...	...	...	...	1883
1884	1,319	12,832	7,459	3,035	73,992	5,131	113,966	8,169	187,458	175	41	52,401	7,589	52,666	7,630	1884
1885	1,376	11,391	3,570	3,897	66,659	9,897	167,534	13,794	264,193	25	6	35,543	5,305	35,568	5,311	1885
1886	1,390	14,500	6,797	12,253	248,331	2,488	50,221	14,741	298,552	7,737	964	37,203	5,248	44,940	6,212	1886
1887	1,623	15,463	22,220	13,819	243,661	2,439	41,168	16,258	284,829	3,243	402	17,034	2,075	20,277	2,477	1887
1888	769	7,275	11,933	3,533	56,174	3,526	56,875	7,059	112,549	7,666	888	17,834	1,845	25,490	2,733	1888

E. R. N. MACCARTHY, Sub-Collector.

APPENDIX No. 38.

APPROXIMATE STATEMENT OF ACREAGE AND VALUE OF SUGAR MACHINERY DESERTED OR NOT WORKED AT PRESENT ON THE MARY RIVER AND TINIANI CREEK, MARYBOROUGH.

Name of Plantation.	Estimated Value of Machinery.	Estimated Acreage.
	£	Acres.
Magnolia	14,000	500
Tallasco	2,000	200
Kirenbbin	5,000	200
Nevada	6,000	500
Maryborough Sugar Company	5,000	400
Good Hope (Central Mill) ...	5,000	100
Wilson, Tiaro	500	100
Myrtle Grove	1,000	80
Antigua	8,000	500
Miller Brothers	500	80
Iverah	1,600	120
Timbrell	1,000	80
	49,600	2,860
Add for machinery only in partial use	25,000	...
	£84,600	

The cost of getting the land and cane ready for the mill in the first instance is as follows:—

	£ s. d.
Felling and burning-off scrub, per acre	4 0 0
Holing, 3,000 holes to the acre at 3s. per 100	5 10 0
Plants, 6,000 plants at 10s. per 1,000	3 0 0
Two hoeings	2 0 0
One trashing	1 0 0
	£15 10 0

Thus primary cost of machinery and getting ready of crop for first cutting on lands idle are, total—

Machinery	£84,000
2,860 acres at £15 10s.	44,330
	£128,330

APPENDIX No. 39.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM MR. ANGUS GIBSON, BINGERA PLANTATION, BUNDABERG, REGARDING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CANE GRUB.

Bingera Plantation.

Bundaberg, 6th March, 1889.

DEAR SIR,

The effects of irrigation on the land you have seen. One very important matter was overlooked by me which should have been mentioned—viz., that where a plentiful supply of water is put on the land, as in our case, the grub, which appears to have made the stool of the cane his home during the dry weather, cannot stand the water as we put it on the land, but at once leaves the cane, comes out on the surface, and dies. We see thousands of cases such as I describe, and during the summer months I have noticed the crows and butcher-birds in hundreds, picking them up as they come to surface.

Apologising for troubling you in this matter,

I am, &c.,

ANGUS GIBSON.

H. E. King, Esq., Sugar Commissioner.

APPENDIX No. 40.

LETTER FROM MR. J. W. SUTTON, BRISBANE, SHOWING THE EFFECT THE DEPRESSION IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY HAS HAD ON HIS TRADE.

Brisbane, 15th March 1889.

DEAR SIR,—Your note of yesterday to attend and give evidence before the Sugar Industry Commission came under my notice a little after 2 p.m. I was therefore unable to collect facts and be present at 2.30. I have therefore just noted down a few facts in connection with our business with sugar planters.

We may state that our business has been in nearly all cases with small planters, the capabilities of the mills ranging from 15 cwt. to 4 tons per day, the plants costing from £800 to £5,000.

In addition to the names mentioned we have added to numbers of other plants in the shape of vacuum pans and additional rollers. Those marked thus, X, are now all defunct, either having gone through the Insolvency Court or liquidated by arrangement.

Between the years 1879 and 1884 we made and erected the following mills: X Collins and Watts, Cleveland; X P. Bourke, Cleveland; X Bahr and Company, Albert River; X Buderim Mountain Sugar Company, Mooloolah; Helfelt, Albert River; X Summers and Woolf, Logan; Ernest and Heck, Pimpama; X Meyer, J., Nerang; X Nemert, C., Nerang; X Crawford, J., Pine Mountain; X Lobergager, Pine Mountain; X Port Darwin Sugar Company, Port Darwin; X Pringle and Shankie, Tweed River; X Collie Munro, Burdekin; X Winfield, Albert River; X Wilkin, A. H., Tewantin; X Beardman, C., Tweed River; Skinner, Tweed River.

I have purchased numbers of mills for old iron, and re-melted same. I estimate my losses at between £6,000 and £7,000 with sugar people only.

During

During the above period we had in our employ about 150 hands engaged directly and indirectly in sugar plants. I am certain that had not the Government come to our aid (the engineering trade in general) by giving contracts for their requirements in the colony, there must have been a general collapse. In conclusion, I may state that any questions you may wish to ask I shall feel it a pleasure to answer them.

I am, &c.,
J. W. SUTTON.

W. Robertson, Esq., Secretary to the Sugar Commission.

APPENDIX No. 41.

RETURN OF VESSELS RECRUITING in the SOUTH SEA ISLAND LABOUR TRADE.

Department of Pacific Island Immigration,
Brisbane, 25th March, 1889.

Memorandum for the Sugar Industry Commission.

Number of Vessels arriving with Labourers, Number they brought, and the Number they were licensed to carry, for the Years 1886-1888.

Normal voyages—

	Vessels.	Brought.	Licensed.
1886 ...	20 ...	1,435 ...	2,024
1887 ...	25 ...	1,866 ...	2,875
1888 ...	29 ...	2,160 ...	3,317
	74	5,461	8,216

Exceptional voyages—

1886 and 1888 ...	5 ...	129 ...	633
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The exceptional voyages are the following:—

1886—

April 25.—“Forest King” brought back at request of Government agent owing to insobriety of the crew and want of control over them by the master.

July 8.—“Young Dick” brought back by the master owing to the ship having been attacked and the Government agent and others killed.

1888—

March 12.—“Eliza Mary” brought back on account of death of the captain.

August 29.—“May” brought back on account of the Government agent having blown his hand off, death subsequently ensuing.

November 24.—“Eliza Mary” brought back on account of the Government agent having been wounded.

A. WOODWARD,

Officer in charge Pacific Island Immigration.

The following letter accompanied the above return:—

Pacific Island Office,
25th March, 1889.

SIR,—I now wait upon you with the information you desired relative to the proportion that the recruits bear to the number the ships go out to obtain.

Success arises from a combination of favourable circumstances, not always possible—I may say rarely attained.

An unsuitable master, recruiter, or Government agent are each and all elements of non-success; so also are bad weather, too large vessels, a fixed limit to the voyage, a want of liberality in the distribution of trade, the active canvass now made on the only open recruiting ground—viz., the Hebrides, Banks, Torres, and Southern Solomons. Some of the vessels are too large; smaller vessels would make quicker trips, and be full both ways. Vessels of the size of the “Lavina” and the “Helena” I take to be the most suitable, that is about 120 tons. The “Lavina,” of 119 tons, has made ten trips between March, 1885, and February, 1889, with a capacity at first of 77, but afterwards of 68, and her numbers have been 58, 63, 68, 51, 65, 61, 50, 68, 68, 68. The “Helena,” of 126 tons, has made 10 trips between November, 1884, and November, 1889; her carrying capacity having been fixed successively at 87, 93, and 90, and the numbers she has brought have been 62, 77, 95, 92, 93, 92, 96, 65, 75, and 72.

I trust this information may be in the form you desired, and that it may be of service.

I am, &c.,

A. WOODWARD.

A. S. Cowley, Esq., M.L.A.

APPENDIX No. 42.

LETTER from the MANAGER of the A.U.S.N. Co. in reference to the FRUIT TRADE of QUEENSLAND.

Australasian United Steam Navigation Company, Limited,
Brisbane, 4th April, 1889.

DEAR SIR,—With reference to the evidence which I was recently invited to give before the Commission in regard to the conveyance of sugar and fruit from North Queensland ports to the South, I beg to enclose for your information copies of circulars which we addressed to our commanders on 6th January, and 14th April, 1888, and 22nd March this year, and the last-named circular may be regarded as the direct outcome of the complaints which the Commissioners received from shippers in the North regarding the losses they have sustained in developing the fruit trade.

The

OFFICE COPY
QUEENSLAND WATER WORKS' COMMISSION

